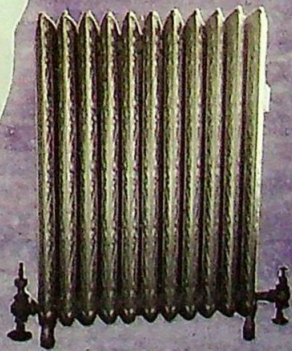
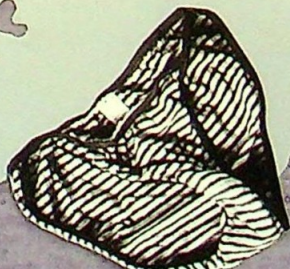
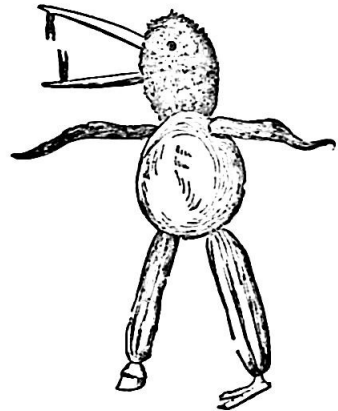


jubilat



jubilat

four



PUBLISHER
Robert N. Casper

jubilat is published twice yearly at the
University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

EDITORS
Robert N. Casper
Christian Hawkey
Kelly Le Fave
Michael Teig

Business & Editorial Address: jubilat
Department of English
482 Bartlett Hall
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003-0510

MANAGING EDITOR
Lisa Olstein

Submissions: Manuscripts are read year round
and must be accompanied by a stamped,
self-addressed envelope. Simultaneous
submissions must be noted as such.
We do not accept electronic submissions.

ASSISTANT MANAGING
EDITOR
Chris Carrier

Subscriptions: Individuals \$14 per year or \$26
for two years. Institutions \$28 per year or
\$52 for two years. Please add \$5 for
Canadian and foreign subscriptions.
Single issues are available for \$8.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Agha Shahid Ali
Christopher Davis
Aleš Debeljak
Alexandra Forman
Molly McQuade
Christopher Merrill
Rafael Pérez-Torres
D. A. Powell
Samuel Ogden White

Distributed by Ingram, DeBoers,
and Small Press Distributors.

Design by Quale Press.

Special thanks to: Noy Holland,
Fred Byron, Matthea Harvey,
and Eliza Vaillant.

Visit us at
www.jubilat.org

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Will Esposito
Melissa Karoutas
Michael Robins

© 2002 jubilat. No portions of jubilat
may be reproduced without permission.

ISSN: 1529-0999

CONTENTS

- 5 *Four Poems*
ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI (Translated by ROD MENGHAM)
- 12 *Haiku*
JAMES SHEA
- 15 *The Welt*
ARTHUR SZE
- 16 *Four Poems*
DARA WIER
- 22 *A Chrestomathy on Desire*
REGINALD SHEPHERD
- 35 *Four Poems*
RICHARD JACKSON
- 39 *Quiet*
STEPHANIE STRICKLAND
- 40 *Pipe-Stem Daybook Two*
GEORGE OPPEN
- 56 *Three Poems*
WAYNE SULLINS
- 59 *Reins, Annals*
LIZ WALDNER
- 61 *Two Poems*
JOHN ASHBERY
- 63 *Three Poems*
El Taller Blanco
EUGENIO MONTEJO (Translated by PETER BOYLE)
- 73 *The Ghosts of My Friends*
- 82 *Three Poems*
JOYELLE MCSWEENEY

- 85 *Try to Remember and Follow*
CHRIS JACKSON
- 86 *jubilat Interview*
Five Poems
DEAN YOUNG
- 109 *The Prodigal Daughters' Dishes of Chinese Emperor*
GRAND SICHUAN INT'L
- 115 *Two Poems*
RUSSELL EDSON
- 117 *Three Poems*
PAUL ÉLUARD (Translated by LISA LUBASCH)
- 122 *Games of Loneliness*
NURIT ZARCHI (Translated by LISA KATZ)
- 137 *The Fighting Spiders of Bogeo*
PETER RICHARDS
- 139 *When the Arrow Young Men Created the World*
and One Became Pregnant by the Other
JIM ELLEDGE
- 154 *Bulldog Toy*
CORT DAY

Original cover art and design
JEFF HILLIARD & NINA SWIFT

SHROVETIDE (11/12 AUGUST 1993)

Andrzej Sosnowski

But when he conducts the survey of his loved ones
we won't be in it, even though we loved the encore
of the seasons, the carnival of stars, heaven's heavy-breathing
flooded with light on that August night when
we reversed smoothly into the side of a forest
hooting at the curbs, splitting our sides
the summer was so green and so depraved.
What we needed was to sink down onto the
soft banks of dawn light, but night was
scooping us up into a heaven of meteors.

Well, they order these things differently in other parts.
When we stood swaying on wobbly legs
cigarettes stuck to our lips, two ships at anchor
giving each other the once over, sending unreadable signals—
don't you pine to be just a perspective
in the field of my vision, not something dazzled
by the pale flickers on your shades?
The atmosphere is so oppressive. It's as if my days
had been inventoried and your lips prepared
to say, well, on that particular occasion
(which was also the last) fate
made up its mind, kept a weather eye open
insofar as the all-embracing one spirits off
into the future something lost long ago

that life withdrew from circulation
like a meteorite. And ever since
every step you take follows the road to nowhere
and that's where I'll be waiting.

A SONG FOR EUROPE

Is that a rainbow? No one has seen one for 40 years
it's the end of the world or something of that kidney.
Do not run to the shelter. When love is
quite literally an occult power divvying up life
into equal parts bliss and loss—like the siren
slanting through memory in the air-raid of flashbacks—
this is Germany close to the French border.
The dream enlarges of the battle of continents.
The factories spew by night, there are discords and afterglows
and the style of this tale is impossible to pin down
so the poem is shoved this way and that before ending up
in the hands of an unknown recipient.

It was never thus. No, it was ever thus.
Will you be the one? Such a strange encounter—with an emerald
round your neck and a shadow on your eyeshadow—is that a smile
or a veil of mourning for the words that have gone missing.
Is the emerald so that you won't
distract yourself? So the poem can tail you
like a shadow and screen your eyes, I mean this
poem—a dark spot on the truth fetched up from the depths
of a tear, a shiver of light, vitreous full stop
that terminates all this chat about broken mirrors?

Be her, be the one left over, in the quiet of the 'all clear.'
Perhaps we were callous to be drawn so easily into
the black-out life with never a hint
when you took the ground from under my feet

while the sky took an overdose of snow? Love
isn't the word, but neither is any other. The poem knows this
and declares it, as if it's declaring the Blitz.

TROPE FOR TROPE

Halfway there and the flames engulfed us
the prompter will be on cue in a minute.
We flowed, no we didn't, we fled and now
upright now head down you go like water through a mill-gate
out of breath and out of your depth that should give them
something to dream of. As plain as the words in a song

'just like a woman.' But this
high-gloss, semi-technicolour
shoestring of days, pages torn from a diary
glowing like eclectic postmarks
in the album—was it for this, dear basilisk, we lit our powder train?
The explosives are in our possession

I fear, this is it quite frankly.
A match flares up. There's a cackle of hyenas and the light
blowing up in our faces. *Wham!* The audience
curls up into a ball, while the hero
drives away into the weird glare
glancing back over his shoulder at the clinker of empire.

The aureole sheens in the eyes of his bride to be.

Meanwhile, we are quite patently elsewhere, fluorescent fish
in a derelict aquarium. When did you start hearing things
like the refrain underlying that famous lullaby
or did you work out in advance that background noises
won't get a look in? Even when sleeping you leave a trail
and only a part of it can be read
when it doesn't look a bit like what it isn't, which is blood.

A SEASON IN HEL

Banquo: It will be rain tonight.

1st Murderer: Let it come down.

We're too late for summer, so we leave
our watches at the beach. Time has its
own escapades, such as the brief interval
when your glittering ring is swallowed by wet sand
setting like cement in a downrush of bronzed feet.
And the damp can dream its dream about the museum
uncurling over the springs and jewels
exhaling under the golden watch-case
until the sea and time itself both end.

Every night I down a half litre with the wife.
Rigged out the same for a date as for working or moping.
Sometimes we put ourselves in the way of time
luminous points on the peninsular little hand
sitting on the dial of the sea. And
she needs that world enough and time, though our hearts
are in our knapsacks and we're only cleaning up
the old brushwood sea defences, the defile of shrubs
and we drift off to sleep as time with the lightest tread
is buried in the drift of sand.

This way, dunes are on the level in time's employ.
You meet with the sun, or you meet with the clouds
but not that often; which is why you act mysterious
and flatten time underfoot like a fag-end.

Then again, there's a lighthouse at your lips
and a light we revolve before morning comes and we
dispatch ourselves without addressing the envelopes.
Rain starts to fall. The standing waves lean over us.
On the meeting of our eyes there is media silence
though events have since shown its momentous importance.

—translated from the Polish by Rod Mengham

HAIKU

James Shea

Upon Kissing You after You Vomited.
Upon Walking You Home and You Pissing
in Your Pants. Upon Asking a Complete Stranger
about Our Situation. Upon Reading Issa's
Prescripts "Issa in a State of Illness"
"At Being Bewildered on Waking" and Realizing
the Haiku Poets Were Not So Laconic and How
Could They Be? Poem Before Dying. Poem
Shortly Before I Head to Dinner. Poem in Which
I Enter Drops of Dew Like a Man with Tiny Keys.
Hitomaro has a poem called On Seeing
the Body of a Man Lying among the Stones
on the Island of Samine in Sanuki Province.
Kanyu's short poem is called A Poem
Shown to My Niece Sonsho on Reaching
the Barrier of the Ran after Being Relegated
to an Inferior Position. Poem Louis Aragon
Would Be Proud Of. Poem I'll Never Show You.
Poem Written in a Bugs Bunny Cartoon as the
Plane's Controls Come Off in My Hands. Poem
that Jerks Around Like a Hamster in a Bag. Basho
wrote a haiku for his students that he claimed
was his death poem. The night before
he said that for the last 20 years every poem
he had written had been his death poem. Upon
No Longer Recalling My Thoughts When I Was a Boy

Within My Father's Stare. At Being Exhausted
at Having to Explain Why Using Slang
Is More Fun than Reading a Dictionary of Slang.
The poet Saikaku once wrote 23,500 verses
in 24 hours. Basho saw Mt. Nikko and said,
"I was filled with such awe that I hesitated
to write a poem." Upon Looking Past You
into the Mattress, into the Faces of Prior Lovers.
Upon Trying to Cultivate My Inner Life While
Also Killing My Ego. On Watching
a 200 pd. Endangered Orangutan
Rape My Wife While She Shouts at Me
Not to Shoot Him. On Seeing a Blood-Shot
Spanish Boy Who Was Not Even Crying He Was So Sad
And Not Even Crying He Was So Sad. Poem
in Which I Embody a Moment So Vividly, So
Succinctly, Yet Decorate It with Such Sills,
Such Elaborations. Upon Doodling Your Name
Which Became Your Face Emerging from Day-Old
Coals. Upon Reading that Basho Believed "A Haiku
Revealing 70 to 80% of Its Subject Is Good, Yet
Those Revealing 50 to 60% Will Never Bore Us."
On Finally Leaving My Attic and Hearing English
for the First Time in 20 Years and It Sounding
Like an Animal's Cry Before It Attacks. Poem
in Response to Flying all the Way to Rome
to Meet You and Being Dumped at the Airport.
Poem about the Next Two Weeks We Spent Together.
Poem as I Sit on this Curb with My Head
in My Hands. Poem After Learning the Japanese
Word for the Simultaneous Feeling of Love
and Hatred. Poem for the Mountain at the End

of My Street. Poem in Response to Some of My
Recent Poems that Seem to Have Been Written
Inside of an Aquarium. On Spending a Week in Silence
at a Monastery and Not Being Allowed Pen or Paper.
On Meditating and Feeling Like I Was a Blue Flame.
On Getting Up and Scribbling Something in the Bathroom.
On Stopping at the Train Tracks and Having a Deer
Break His Head Through My Passenger Window,
Stare at Me, and Then Run Back into the Wood.

THE WELT

Arthur Sze

He wants a day marked like a Sung tea bowl
with indented lip and hare's-fur markings.

Yesterday they walked by two decomposing lambs
at the entrance to the big arroyo, covered

their mouths as they approached from downwind.
During firing, gravity pulls iron oxide

slip down to form a hare's-fur pattern
on the glaze surface. They gagged at the stench,

saw pink plastic twine around the neck
of the mangled one by the post—he only wanted

to see it once. They walked on to the low
voltage fence, looked for bison but saw none,

tried to spark the fence with a thrown stick.
He likes the plum blossom heat when their

bodies sway and thrash. They returned along
a smaller arroyo. In the aftermath, though cool

to touch, he likes a ghost of the body's heat.
In the morning they woke to sunburn on their necks.

THAT VAGRANT MISTRAL VEXING THE SUN: A FAR CRY

Dara Wier

I washed my brain and hung it to dry
In a steady breeze on a black clothes line.
I put a blanket down where it looked as if
The sun would be for a few hours more.
I stood by a long way off, on a tower,
On a rock, on a rooftop made of glass.
I remembered half of bible history in reverse,
I watched myself go back to being a romance
Between two hellbent cells.
I followed an earthworm as far into its veriform
Home as it would let me go.
I followed ants carrying nearly invisible separate
Parts of something they wanted to carry back.
I no longer had a face, if I ever did.
The angle of the sun showed me shadows of things
I'd never seen.
I looked at my hands through a magnifying lens
Long enough for smoke to emerge.
I wouldn't need that brain again, I left it
For birds, in lieu of words, and seeds.

EARLY MORNING ECOLOGICAL RADIO

And the ones they wanted most
would have fluorescent orange eyes.
The new bridge would be beautiful,
its cables would be woven by spiders.
Leeches and maggots were back in business
doing for us what they'd always done,
or doing for themselves some things we found
beneficial.
In that life I was held together with hedgehog spine.
Some seeds choose not to germinate for hundreds of
years. That's up to them.
Aren't there some things you wouldn't tell a soul?
It's strange though because you wind up talking to
yourself and there seems to be at least two of you
sometimes agreeing, sometimes getting into a twisted
bitch. As if you were a kid, back in the wild,
making up a world you sometimes ruled, and sometimes
you had to hide.
When they say one hand isn't telling the other hand
what it's doing, what are they saying? Maybe they're
praying for rain, maybe for rain to go away & rain
somewhere else, it's hard to say.
We tried to bend without buckling & now & then we did.
A past without precedent is the only one it's safe to
visit, we can be one another there without damage, we

can slip into one another's skin.
Pass the garden, please.
We'd spotted a band of insurgent analysands rotating
introspectively into the farm belt.
Once I became accustomed to it, it was good
having eight legs.
When next we meet I will have sewn for you
A stunningly simple shirt.
As if it were the last living shirt on earth.

A SEARCH FOR AN OPPOSITE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION

I took a deep breath, sighed, took my symbol
Out of storage and sat there thinking:
I put my symbol on and started sewing:
But we had not been to the drygoods store,
We had no thread: still it felt and looked
Like sewing: but we had no cloth: still
We were following a pattern: but it didn't
Seem to be visible: still we could see some
Thing gaining shape: but it wasn't what
We'd imagined: still throughout the afternoon
And into the evening we kept at it: sewing
Neverendingly as a steady line of ants, trans-
Lucent, zorapterans, filed across the forest floor:
But we did not know where they were going and
Had been told they were of no economic interest:
Still a gradual lightening of radial basting we
Continued to be sewing: or so it seemed for we
Tacked and we laced and we hemmed in reverse:
We peered through our eyeglasses of bullet-proof
Glass: still we saw a pair of scissors put through
Its paces: but we had not been to the drygoods
Store so were we unable to transport rotations:
Our symbol had been in our family for 49 generations:
It was on the end of the invisible stick God used
To write his name in the dirt: it was on the end
Of the invisible stick God used to write our initials

Next to last on his shopping list: the rococo taste,
Insane coloring, forever dreaming undisturbed by
Reality:

FOR A CHINESE POET WRITING THROUGH THE NIGHT UP ON THE EDGE OF MT. POLLUX

Now I could see I'd been stirring the pot
For almost ten thousand years.
I could see I'd be stirring forever.
So far nothing'd changed.
Nobody appeared.
I stirred myself into a bottomless sleep,
I was the smallest thing in the world.
Fragment of spit, rumor of mud,
Something that almost might have been.
I no longer had skin or fine hairs along
My arms for wind to chill or an ant to wander
Over. I no longer had friends.
No sister, no brother.
I hadn't cried when my father & my mother
Waved good-bye and their ship exited the harbor.
I hadn't asked them where they were going.
They left me no instructions.

A CHRESTOMATHY ON DESIRE

Reginald Shepherd

He sits down to write. There's music playing in the room (there's always music playing), there's a book open on the desk in front of him. He writes: "It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel." He writes: "Book, *Doxa*, Stupidity." No, that's what he reads.

This all happens a long time ago.

1. "... When have I ever not loved
the pain of love?"
2. "I'm sure that if one tries to live only for love one cannot be happy, but perhaps happiness is not your deepest need."
3. He wants to write a lover's discourse of his own, knowing that when he speaks he speaks only of himself, never of his beloved. His beloved exists only so that he may feel "love," as in so many songs he's heard: himself as other, *hypocrite semblable*. The songs are experts about love.

"To know that one does not write for the other, to know that these things I am going to write will never cause me to be loved by the one I love (the other), to know that writing compensates for nothing, sublimates nothing, that it is precisely *there where you are not*—this is the beginning of writing."

His writing is always the absence of the beloved. The lover writes under the sign of Penelope, whose weaving and unweaving took the place of the man she had married, took the shape of her waiting. But this other comes into

being only by being absent. The lover's true Penelope is himself, and he is his own Odysseus, wandering in search of a self he could love, in love with his own wandering. Every day she got to reweave her tapestry.

4. Arthur. Hugh. Shane. He writes down men's names for their music. Jonathan. Patrick. Timothy. They sound to him like names he could love, names from a prime-time soap opera.

Jeremy. Justin. William. He writes down names of men he cannot have, because his hands are full of words, his fingers flush with letters. This is what he loves: distance, the page's white and empty halls, echoing, echoing. He wants to be untouchable: his longings are his hermitage, his austerity.

He can believe only in another's body, never his own, and only if he cannot touch that body. He believes in the space between himself and those men: it's the stage of his desires, his theater without an audience. "Longing, we say, because desire is full / of endless distances."

Alexander. Marcus. Sean. He writes down the names that mean love, many loves. To remind himself. He writes down his desires in alphabetical order, no messy body parts disturb his reverie.

5. "Desire is an activity within a lack; it is an appetite stimulated by an absence. But it is never only a lack. Desire is an hallucinated satisfaction in the absence of the source of satisfaction. In other words, it is an appetite of the imagination. Indeed, the infant is already an artist of sorts in the sense that he invents and is excited by imaginary equivalents of remembered satisfactions. The activity of desiring is inseparable from the activity of fantasizing. There is no scene of desire which is not an elaboration, a kind of interpretation, of other scenes. In the same way that literary works are always critical revisions of other literary works, our desires reformulate both other desires and the pleasures [whose absence is] at the source of all desire."

6. "I stood in my kitchen, my radio playing
Songs like 'Tainted Love' and 'Love is Strange'
As I listened and the words hit my ears
I cried sudden tears—
Now I want to wake up"

Listening to the songs by which he vicariously lives his desires, the music which has shaped those musings (his imago of himself as passionately loving, he who has longed passionately for passion and who has loved only love), he thinks of Kafka's cruel honesty: "You cannot love me, much as you would like; you are unhappily in love with your love for me, but your love for me is not in love with you."

"Narcissus loves what he is. Sappho bitterly worships in her companions what she has not been." How he craves that suffering which signifies possession, how bitter he is that he has not tasted love's bitterness. "I loved not yet, yet I loved to love, and out of a deep-seated want, I hated myself for wanting not."

He lies alone in bed in the dark (of course, always in the dark, alone) listening to the singer's plea: "you know I'm not crazy." Songs always insist things like "I'm crazy for you." The lover's, like the poet's, is a divine madness, he is possessed by the *daimon*, the winged blind god Eros. His passion is that which he suffers at the hands of his passion; his torments are both experience and proof of the experience. *I am not mad*: and he is allowed to say this because he says it out of the throes of his madness; his denial is his avowal. But he's not crazy after all, though often distracted and frequently disturbed. How he would like to be mad, brushed by those dark wings which spring, after all, from the shoulders of a god. The lover is the madman who, by speaking of his madness, is exiled from his madness. His avowal is his denial; his ability to speak betrays that which he seeks to speak. (The lover is exiled from language, but he is also exiled within language.) "I am mad

to be in love, I am not mad to be able to say so, I double my image: insane in my own eyes (I know my delirium), simply unreasonable in the eyes of someone else, to whom I quite sanely describe my madness; conscious of this madness, sustaining a discourse upon it."

He is not mad; nor is he in love, though he would love to be: all that he is not, feels not, and longs to feel and be. In love is where he would be if he could get there from here. *I don't care how you get here, just get here if you can.* Like Frank O'Hara, he would like to die for love, but he hasn't. But O'Hara did die, run over by a dune buggy on Fire Island. He is alive and not in love: he goes to work, he goes to clubs, he shops for food, for clothes, he leads a normal, underpaid life. "*I am not someone else:* that is what I realize with horror." He is not taken out of himself, he can help himself, he is helpless before his own capability. The song promises to take him to the place love lives, but never tells him where or when.

He lies alone in the dark (he's back in bed alone again, where he began, where he ends up) mourning the pain that love could transfigure into suffering, mourning the feelings he's never had. "If I could fly, I'd pick you up, I'd take you into the night." So long as he could cry along with those songs (ersatz emotions produced by real songs), then he was *feeling*. What is it Noel Coward's character says? "Amazing how potent cheap music can be." Passion is that which is suffered (passion is pathos, and somewhat pathetic): so if he suffered, he was passionate, a pilgrim on the path to the temple of love. Now he mourns for that melancholy, drowns in his nostalgia for past miseries. "There's a lot of things I want, a lot of things that I want to be." If he can't have what he wants, let him have at least that deprivation, spirit's noble poverty. He wanted no distractions. "I've given up so many things, don't ask me to give up on" . . . What's left? Only giving up. He was never so righteous, never had a brother.

He does, of course, wake up (he fell asleep eventually, lying there alone); he realizes he was never dreaming. "You might sleep, but you will never

dream.” He wants this constant craving to stop, the music to finally end: all this noise in his head. The singer wants to wake up from his nightmare of unrequited love, but then he just wants to wake up beside his beloved. He can’t make up his mind what he wants, but he never stops wanting. He wants to be set free or to set himself free. But “I immediately forget what I would then have to sacrifice—my madness itself.” How can one long not to long when what one longs for is the pitch of longing? He longs to *be* his suffering, or he longs to be *his* suffering. “I could be contented. I don’t need to suffer.” But suffering is the only contentment he can imagine, and the inadequacy of his suffering is the source of his discontent.

7. His longing yearns beyond its object toward longing itself, but his longing can never be one with longing as such. He wants to find his freedom in *perfect* enslavement. Isn’t want the transcendence of need, desire the surplus of the *merely* necessary? His desire, his self-chosen incarceration, is the image of his freedom. If he could no longer long, *then* he would be a prisoner: of the everyday, the *mundane*. “May I bow to Necessity not / To her hirelings.” Going to work and watching television would be all he had, and they would have him completely.

Desire as the self-overcoming of need? His faith in love (shaken, but still stirring) does not require that he love anyone, merely that he love. He is love’s most faithful lover.

“If you have many desires, then your life will be interesting.”

8. “There must be more than just emotion.
Longing is enough to get me where I am,
but it cannot change me . . .”

9. “I want to record the peculiar quality of inevitability in this seduction, its blissful, infallible trajectory. The whole experience feels predetermined,

shaped by the one-way ritual of one-night stands—and yet it was disrupted by a violent exhilaration that explodes the terms of that simple story. The disorderly excitement generated by such a predicament could be called love, but as I grow older, I am increasingly reluctant to write feelings off in the name of love—especially emotions that really bear little or no relation to the actual object, . . . the arbitrary other. The excitement is like a little eruption, libidinal, an opening out of desire, without an object, only an aim. The object, this other person, is insignificant. The aim, blurred in the confusion, the surge of excitement, is narcissistic, repetitive, reductive—nothing to do with love.”

So frequently he’s simplified what he feels to the shape and dimensions of “love”: something he has never known. Has anyone? Surely they must have: they describe it so well.

He spent weeks, as they say, wanting J. *badly*. The question of the competence of his desires, or of his competence to name or even recognize them, remained unasked. *I like him so*, he told himself; but as he told him that he didn’t feel about him the way that he felt about him (a favorite pastime of his) he realized that as much as he thought about him when they were apart, he didn’t enjoy the time he spent with him. Being with him made him feel uncomfortable, bad, angry (they disagreed about everything, even homosexuality itself), *he didn’t like him*. What had he meant? He liked it (the idea, the phrase, “my boyfriend”) and confused it with him. As it turned out, neither of them had ever liked the other much.

He’s come to like this profusion of pronouns, this confusion of persons.

10. “When I really get confused is when I ask myself, what do I want? The cozy thing about rejection is that it never raises that issue: in love, I simply *want*. You don’t want. That’s what makes it simple: I want you to want me. I imagine that I would stay with you forever, that I would always want you. It is more straightforward when you are absent. Your presence presents

difficulties, complicates: I no longer want you, I want sex with you, you (amazingly) seem to want something with me, but it's not sex. We tend to have an unpleasant time."

And then S. His friend M. asked if he liked him (S., that is), and he realized that he didn't know. He didn't *know* S., how could he know whether he had feelings about him? Two or three things he knows about S.: he is attractive, he is attracted to him, he wants to sleep with him. M. said, "So you're still just infatuated." Another label for feelings that don't quite exist, with no clear antecedents.

II. "Romantic love has been one of our most effective myths for making sense out of our sensations. It organizes body intensities around a single object of desire and it provides a more or less public theater for the enactment of the body's most private life. In love, desires and sensations are both structured and socialized. The loved one invests the world with a hierarchy of desirability. At last we have a measure of value, and even the unhappiest lover can enjoy the luxury of judging (and controlling) his experience according to the distance at which it places him from the loved one's image or presence. Passion also makes us intelligible to others. Observers may be baffled as to why we love this person rather than that one, but such mysteries are perhaps more than compensated for by the exceptional visibility in which the passionate pursuit of another person places the otherwise secret 'formulas' of individual desire.

"Love is desire made visible, but it is also desire made somewhat abstract. We don't yearn merely for sensations in romantic desire; we seek the more complex satisfaction of another desiring presence. To desire persons rather than sensations is to indicate a certain predominance of the mind over the body. The sublime-sublimating nature of love is clearly enough pointed to by the notable fact that, as we see in Racine, even the most obsessive sexual passion can be adequately described with practically no reference to the

body. Indeed, the more obsessive the passions, the more insignificant the body may become; sexual fascination steals some of the body's vitality, and therefore partly dissipates physical energies. Love, like art, is a *cosa mentale*; like art, it systematizes, communicates, and dilutes the fragmented intensities of our senses. But this is of course too one-sided. . . . An abstract psychology of mental states constantly refers to an impossible and indescribable meeting of bodies. The dream of certain happy sensations sustains all speech, while the realization of that dream would be the end of speech. In its continuous allusiveness to both sensation and thought, love once again reminds us of art. They are both pursuits of sensual intensities through activities of sublimation."

12. He writes, "Desire is present because one element has been distorted by another. Am I that distorted element, and by what have I been distorted? Him or myself?"

13. He reads and he listens, he always knows the words.

"You might spend all your life searching for some ideal—
Why not change something vague for something you can feel?
And if you were to ask me which choice I would take,
I would lose myself tonight, find myself some other day."

"If you give yourself to something,
Is there anything left you can call your own?
If I give my body to someone,
Can I keep a little part of it for me?
Oh leave a part that's free."

14. He can only believe in another's body so long as he can't touch it; he can only believe in another's person once he has forgotten his body. He writes, "How can we be friends? Sleep with me and then we can begin. Too often that's the end of something left undone."

How bored he gets with another's body once it's his. How obsessed with its every detail and mark, every unique error and imperfection, when it's not. Obsession is his ambition. "Your body would be too real to be believed. / This is easier. This remembering, this grief."

Once he and P. had had sex, he no longer "had a crush on" him, barely thought of him at all. Once he got past the obstacle of his body, he wanted to be his friend. More precisely: in the cab on the way home with P., knowing that they were going to have sex, at that moment he just wanted to talk.

Unless, of course, P. too had decided just to talk. He fucked P. in his living room, and quite adequately from P.'s response.

15. "The origin of pleasure in the body of another person is accompanied by [the inability] to imagine him as being, in any interesting sense, another person."

He asked J. to watch how sensuously T. ate an ice cream cone. When she said T. looked retarded, it made him laugh. He writes, "Of course he's not intelligent: he's the consecration of the sensuous, spirit become lush flesh. He's just a frat boy on the crew team: how could he know that he's a compendium of all the Platonic virtues?" This changes nothing; nothing changes.

16. He believes in love as Saint Paul believed in God: on the evidence of things unseen; he believes as Tertullian believed: because it is absurd.

17. "Though I lie here still beside you,
I burn for you."

How flat the words are on the flat white page, without the woman's high thin voice embodying them (the grain of the voice standing in for the body,

the sound vibrating in his body): the fire has gone out of them. He hears that voice when he reads them, but they mean nothing to anyone else. That's what desire is for him: when he sees him he feels it, but it has nothing to do with him.

He's renounced desire so many times without knowing what it was. It's the only thing that breaks his shell of numb misery and tedium: his alternative to a life. He writes, "I'm nothing without him, but he could have been any dream or nightmare, forgotten in the morning. So he needs me more than I need him: I've made him what he is. He's mine because I desire him. How does that song go? As you desire me?"

18. "[I]t is my desire I desire, and the loved one is no more than its tool. I rejoice at the thought of such a great cause, which leaves far behind it the person whom I have made into its pretext (at least this is what I tell myself, happy to raise myself by lowering the other): I sacrifice the image to the Image-repertoire. And if a day comes when I must bring myself to renounce the other, the violent mourning which then grips me is the mourning of the Image-repertoire itself: it was a beloved structure, and I weep for the loss of love, not of him."

19. "What a strange perfection of everything human that an object of desire can be pleurably obtained through opposing it."

"Seeing oneself as other determines an everlasting frustration and vain attempts at making one's 'I' and one's imago coincide, as well as a desire for oneself (sameness) under the guise of otherness."

"... Lovers, as the wind calls
desire and means those who never knew each other."

20. "There are the lover and the beloved, but these two come from different countries. Often the beloved is only a stimulus for all the stored-up love

which has lain quiet within the lover for a long time hitherto. And somehow every lover knows this. He feels in his soul that his love is a solitary thing. He comes to know a new, strange loneliness and it is this knowledge that makes him suffer. So there is only one thing for the lover to do. He must house his love within himself as best he can; he must create for himself a whole new inward world—a world intense and strange, complete in himself.”

To be “in love,” obsessed with the intensity of the feelings to which he aspires, is the proof of the depth of his emotions; to be unrequitedly “in love” is the proof both of his suffering (that is, his right to speak) and of his safety: he need be hurt by no one but himself, and his suffering (his alternative to pain) is under his command.

21. Desire has become a routine in which he feels confined: an anodyne to numbness becomes a numbing regimen. The eruption of desire becomes the routine from which desire promised to rescue him.

As passion enacts the desire not to be bored, so boredom is the cure for passion. One day, one longing night, his passion, which promised to banish boredom, will begin to bore him. He will grow tired of desire, sighing to himself, “Not *that* again.” It is always the same, isn’t it? “Always the same desire,” same song on the radio. “No, let us stop telling / each other stories about love.”

“But on the ninety-ninth night, the mandarin stood up, put his stool under his arm, and went away.”

SOURCES

Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes

1. Derek Walcott, "The Fist," *Collected Poems 1948-1985*
2. E.M. Forster to J.R. Ackerley, in Ackerley's *My Father and Myself*
3. Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*
4. Robert Hass, "Meditation at Lagunitas," *Praise*
5. Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*
6. Pet Shop Boys, "I Want to Wake Up," *Actually*; Marguerite Yourcenar, *Fires*; St. Augustine, *Confessions*; Culture Club, "You Know I'm Not Crazy," *Kissing to Be Clever*; Madonna, "Crazy for You," *The Immaculate Collection*; Barthes, *A Lovers Discourse*; Oleta Adams, "Get Here"; Barthes again; Benny Mardones, "Into the Night" (as covered by the luscious Nick Kamen); The Righteous Brothers, "Just Once in My Life"; The Smiths, "Suffer Little Children," *The Smiths*; Barthes again; Eurythmics, "The Walk," *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)*; W.S. Merwin, "Wish," *The Lice*
7. Jenny Holzer, installation piece, Museum of Contemporary Art, Boston
8. Linda Gregg, "The Ghosts Poem," *Alma*
9. Leslie Dick, *Without Falling*
10. Leslie Dick again
11. Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*

13. The Comsat Angels, "Will You Stay Tonight?," *Land*; The James, "If Things Were Perfect," *Songs from a Village*.
14. Grace Butcher, "What Is Left," *Before I Go Out on the Road*
15. Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *Passion: An Essay on Human Personality*
17. Hot Gossip, "Burn for You"
18. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*
19. Philip Rieff, *Fellow Teachers*; Nelly Furman, "The Politics of Language," in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*; Linda Gregg, "Lovers," *Alma*
20. Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café*
21. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*; The Fixx, "Sign of Fire," *Reach the Beach*; Linda Gregg, "Forget All That," *Alma*

THE VALLEY

Richard Jackson

So this is the valley carved by words that drowned
trying to reach you, the river they dammed up like logs,
the forest with its animals wandering through ground fog,
the fish trapped in streams like dreams the night ploughed
under. This is the valley where the air wipes the brow
of morning, wiping off my tears the way a flogged
man is helped by his torturer, or some hunting dog,
sensing his master's prey, never suspects Death's shroud
that covers the burrow he enters. I see you in these forms,
but never myself, for I have become a kind of Inn
of fossilized love, some remote Inn of infinite sadness.
It is from here I used to see you, used to pursue the storm
clouds of my heart before you rose above their wind,
rose, a pure spirit, discarding these images of madness.

NOT HERE

My days are deer leaping from sight before they are seen,
shadows spreading into night before the sun ever rises,
eyes that close without ever opening, masked disguises
with nothing behind them, bitter or sweet words that mean
anything but what they mean. The world's torn at its seams,—
heart from mind, flesh from bone,—and these eyes
that watched Love's body as it suddenly seemed to rise
like some saint towards heaven now only blaspheme
her memory, for she lies beyond the gauze of stars,
before and after any time I knew her, like some comet
whose life is mostly beyond our sight, whose solitary life
is life itself. And so as my own life seems lived from afar,
my hair turning, my body failing, I struggle within time's net
to dream her soul beyond all time, beyond this veil of strife.

THE QUANDARY

If this isn't love, then her heart's dealing from the bottom of the deck.
If this isn't love, then I've been given the wrong role in the wrong play.
If it is good, why does the sky seem to crack above me today?
If it is evil, why is my heart on the gallows, my soul on the rack?
If I burn by my own will, what heresy cast me into the fires?
If it wasn't my will, what good can any prayer accomplish?
Fate, choice, heart, soul, game, role or fanciful wish,
how does she have this power over me if I don't consent or conspire?
If I do consent—shut up, that's what I should do. I'm tumbling through
some
emotional space like a new meteor, aimless, the proverbial
ship on a storm-tossed sea, smarter than some, dumber than others,
so I can't really tally the ledger on what's best for me or her
except to know I am poor without her, rich in memory, and begin to feel
death come each dawn, and most alive when my heart turns stone.

THE CAVE

If I had stayed to strike the match ends of stars in poetry's cave
instead of trying to break the worst dark night over my knees,
you might have had your poet now, someone who'd weave
a blanket against the cold, who'd bury every grave inside a grave.
If I had stayed to echo each fist of smoke, to work the soul's lave
and shape a world you already knew by rote, to breathe each ready breeze,
I'd never know to cut the twisted vines from your heart's withered trees,
to spread my wings above your fire, or pull the dagger from the milky way.
Listen, the world beside this one cares little for us. It's an argument of stars.
Some say these crippled words are the smoke that abandons us for sky.
Don't listen. Even if it's only a light across the marsh, it can tell us we're alive.
I'll reap whatever I need from thistles and thorns with this broken scythe
of a poem, and, one hand filled with dirt, the other clearing away false stars,
I'll sow a world in every smile of yours that lately had become a scar.

QUIET

Stephanie Strickland

At night, the mountain breathes,
so quiet is the air
on the lower slopes.
Small dusts, returned
to their grooved bed in the dune,
debris of thistle sunk back
on the sand,
the dander of animals
nestled in their shag: so quiet
has the air become,
on the lower slopes,
only the shadow of a human
falls and rises on the rocks.

from PIPE-STEM DAYBOOK TWO

George Oppen

Pulitzer-prize winning poet George Oppen's "Daybooks," distinguished in his archive from thousands of loose sheets and notebooks, consists of writings bound by him into small makeshift books by various means (pipe-stem cleaners, staples, and, in one case, a nail hammered through a stack of papers into a small block of wood). Part one of the second "Pipe-Stem Daybook" (bound ca. 1966) is one of two "Pipe-Stem Daybooks" and one of five "Daybooks" overall. Oppen's individual pages are distinguished here by the symbol "++"; standard font designates text typed by Oppen, while italics designate text handwritten by Oppen. Insertion arrows (^ ^) signify text meant by Oppen for insertion into sentences or paragraphs (signaled by arrows or other markers in the original). With the exception of bracketed text designating editorial excisions and endnote references, all markings—underline, ~~strikeline~~, boxed text, etc.—are Oppen's own.

—Stephen Cope

++ We can say of the world that it is explained by God. And then we must say of God what we would have said of the world.

But all questions and all standards of relevant answers have been derived from our experience of the world.

It is possible to explain an engine. The flywheel actuated the push rids which open the correct valve at the proper moment which—etc; there is no difficulty, it can all be explained. But we are looking at the motor from outside. If there were nothing outside of this engine, and nothing before it nor after it, and no laws but those of the motor—if we could conceive of nothing beyond it or before it or after it—we would ask other questions.

We cannot see what is always present

++ I take this to be a factual account:

The individual wakes ~~to~~ in the world.¹ He wakes also to himself and to what he is—he discovers his arm. He seems to himself to be a consciousness which might well have been attached to a different person of different qualities—he discovers whether or not he is brave, whether or not he is clever—he had no opportunity to choose; all these things he found.

this is the basic conception of being; he may marry or not, and he may succeed or not or he may be or not be admirable, but all this, all this of the novels, is superimposed on the basic awareness, the finding of things, the finding of the thing which can only at so great pain be accepted.

It is an insupportable situation for an animal to be human.

[. . .] relevant thought begins with the distrust of language.²

As against the notion of an autonomous logic, of math, as 'the man-made universe':

Fundamental ideas cannot be derived from each other.

'No entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe' (Whitehead in a different context): or, no entity, which is to say also no 'idea' can be conceived as independent of the existence and the nature of the universe.³

We can say of the universe that it is explained by God. And thus we can say of God what we would have said about the universe.

++ *We ask ourselves (with passion) "How does it happen that anything exists?"*

Ontology: a theory of Being

Ta onto: The the

*Like Job we are answered
out of the whirl-wind.
There is no other answer
(Tho there is a voice)*

++

Like Job we are answered out of the whirl-wind

If, in the writing, the young poets will pay less attention to themselves, and more attention to the poem, they will discover marvelous places

i.e. to learn from the poem: to learn from the language

"Who if I cried would hear me"

I doubt that the angels would listen to an ism.⁴

++

Bronk: that clarity & honesty can produce so piercing a music

a poet who fits no school whose work justifies no one's poetry but
his own

Diane certainly among the strongest of the young poets. There is in her

poems a startling clarity of presence, uncompromising and courageous and exposed, unprotected, a startlingly clear and sustained voice. You will not fail to hear it—I promise that you will not.⁵

women blind
to the whole
notre pitie ce coeur—
our pity is your heart—
which leads to all mud

There remains compassion
it is hers compassion

The marvelous
in space no less sad
For being marvelous⁶

The pitfall of women poets: the prescription how to be good, how to be happy, how to be beautiful and nice also to be good: to lie and utter little gasps of pleasure when the world touches one—it is almost too seductive to speak of this bluntly. ~~They gasp with pleasure—~~ And better they wish to arrange things a little, they make suggestions—remembering their gasps—and everyone is infuriated.⁷

++ Williams is wrong, merely wrong, when he destroys ~~or does not achieve~~ the form of thought the form of language, of perception, and ^{for} the sake of grace, of manner.

++ Words stick in the mind
And refer to something that was

A moment ago or a long time past
And the poem, what does the poem refer to?

Is it perhaps abominable
In a time of atrocity
To write poems

Could one not stop

I feel myself lit
Unconsumed ~~like~~ ^{as} a filament
So that time stops

Tho I give no light
But imagine light

*An event which seems to be a part of an infinite series—
We are troubled by an infinite series, or the weight of timelessness unlimited time*⁸

++ 'God'. We choose our own words.

The reconciliation ^{finally} even to death in amor fati, the love of fate. It is—even—an important love, like all love. Like all love expressed in events; it requires occurrences. . . .⁹

++ I can only say it seems to me absurd to imagine a god who exists in transcendence and who speaks to man, or interferes in his affairs, or judges him. Life is, in any case, irrevocably committed to a world without a god; it postulates god only in that it is irrevocably committed

no deep penetration to their sex

"The Thinker', portrait of Louis N. Kenton. Which I called 'the Intellectual'¹⁰

The women (Whistler's women) ~~raised~~ the tall women, raised on Alice in Wonderland and fairy tales emerge into an adulthood which contains only the rugs and the papered walls.

And ordering servants—these young women!¹¹

The immense and helpless sea

Or the cloud, high and piled

Back upon itself

Voyaging alone

Deceives no one

I write of things

Endless, endless,

Innumerable

'Man may not be treated as a means'

Oneself is also a man

Ethics therefore cannot consist in 'doing good'?

No one has said it before. . . but perhaps an 'important' poem contains what could only have been said at that moment.

As Eliot's Wasteland.

'Wisdom' is never quite of the moment.

++ Protected from despair by his youth. I do not mean animal high spirits, but that he is not all there is, there are men in front of him and his undertaking ~~and desire~~ is to get where they are. With no need for discovery [^]or invention[^], with no effort on his part, he has a place to go.¹²

But one cannot lead a life preparing for life, practicing for life, as for a football game. The 'game' must finally have a purpose other than to succeed in it—

(Not perceived by sensory experience)

Being is nothing that we know, yet it is not nothing.

It actually is an intellectual conclusion.

I believe that Plato regards being as an essence; he is of no interest to me if it is so. I am concerned with ontological being, real being, not an ultimate abstraction

of all the things I doubt, I doubt most formal logic.

Ontological being - real being, including Linda's words—
not logical 'being'.

'the ruler rules . . . ' is an absolutely impenetrable phrase to me.
There is no such thing in the universe.

'Things happen'—of some force. We explain one event by another, but the force which causes things to happen is among the mysteries

A spontaneous or autonomous logic, if it exists, seems a subject for psychological *investigation*

++ rime in bourg young people

There has been created a culture, a culture centering around Jazz, and perhaps largely the creation of the Negro, which is not a bourg possession, and young people are drawn into contact with classes ~~other~~ ^{^not^} their own—¹³

++

Each decade a tap is opened
Which becomes the easiest thing to run out of.
It is exhilarating as running water.
This is an image

Of the fact
Of the thousands
Who in the name of originality

Are determined to write
As everyone else in that decade
Writes.

~~A more public, or~~ less domestic art of originality would demand not so much that one write differently from his grandfather as that he should be distinguishable from his contemporaries—

At 18, 19, 20 the poet must find his contemporaries.
At 25, 26, 27 he must be distinguishable from them.
———this may be natural law.

++ Well, there are moods. Why one writes—that's one thing.
But whom is one addressing? and why? That bitch fame. That still more promiscuous bitch, neglect.

++ The groups:

what is wrong? most of these young people could never have written a line of poetry, could never have entered into that experience, if these groups did not exist, if the mode had not been established. And it is fine that they should, it can only be a gain—It is just my ill temper which bothers me, it is hard for me to contain my impatience when the platitudes of the moment are phrased and re-phrased around a room. . . .¹⁴

++ It does something with naturalism, or to naturalism, which has not before been done, and which has the most horrifying consequences. It transfers art to the outside world with a literalness not previously dreamt of, and in doing so shatters momentarily one's emotions concerning both art and the outside world. It produces a staggeringly dead world and a staggeringly dead art, and confronts one with his blank helplessness.¹⁵

Invent the word chordates and one has a thing to which one could be 'loyal'.

For the child, love means that he cannot despair while he believes in his parents. But for most adults love, tho it exists, is idle, non-operative. It is very much like a longing, a nostalgia

no one forgives failure—how can it be 'forgiven'
When a man loses a leg, he is a one-legged man.

qualities

There seem to be two things most unpleasant: the characteristics ~~created~~ by failure which are a consequence of failure, and the qualities which are necessary to success.

At St. Paul's the little niggling voice behind me goes on and on

One could become fond of the gray days after such glories, seen from the little tea-shop

Good children, they will admit to their unhappiness—

'Forging a style', if one is sincere, is forging a syntax. We recognize it as a syntax when we recognize it as sincere.

I imagine a dog
Marooned like Crusoe
And I think of that dog
As ephemeral
Yet I think of his life
As too long

I dislike most of all the theatrical ethic, the ethics of posture. The English gentleman, the fiery Latin, the Bouevardier or the hermit.

But can the survival of humanity, the continuation of humanity, be the highest good? Not very high then. For the meaning of the word 'forever' is an impossibility

++ Jung's point of departure from Freud:

That the psyche is always and only what it is. That it is also a single thing. The unconscious is ineluctably ~~present in~~ ^{^a part of^} the conscious^{ness} and moreover the conscious, even if it were possible to isolate it, cannot be taken as a perfect little machine which constructs a literal model of the universe.¹⁶

++ To be rid of that (whole) crowd, for the effect of that crowd is to hamstring the whole cause by robbing it of its seriousness while pretending heartfelt sympathy (Kierkegaard: the Present Moment)

they will write a ten page poem with less effort and care

than they will expend on capitulating how much money they will need for a trip to Philadelphia.—because that last will have to be right, if they are going to 'see it differently' they will have to 'see it differently' in fact.

~~I THINK A POEM SHOULD BE THE WORK OF A MAN WHO
REALLY MEANS TO DRIVE A NAIL — NOT TO POSTURE OR
TO SHOW OFF — AND WHO KNOWS, HAS KNOWN FROM
CHILDHOOD — HOW A HAMMER SHOULD BE HANDLED.~~

DIANE W. Kierkegaard addresses one of his works to the reader thus: if
he finds him—
(Purity of Heart, Preface, Page 27)

(the relationships of actuality)

I - "like you"— In this way he confronts the relationships of actuality
--

++ 'impossibly brilliant' young people, becoming a serious problem or a serious impossibility.

a forced growth. Mature minds, working at the top of their ability in the preparation of their lectures, exerting the great pressure they are capable of—the students encounter the wrong things at the wrong time, a matter of breaking the roots ~~I don't know if the sources are ever found again—~~

Narrative, first section—

rapidly declares an ethic. And turns suddenly on the
'or whether—'

(rejecting the social responsibility of poetry, but : if the poet writes clearly enuf to know, to know poetically what he is saying, whether he is not afraid to lie . . . He will find himself afraid to lie.

—but—whether he is not in fact murderous. certainly violent. The poem proceeds thru its experiences to the final 'if we would rescue love'. "if". it suggests no imperative, there's none in the poem. But if we would rescue Love—we will need clarity and scrupulousness. You will find it so. But it is a contingent ethic.¹⁷

(he discusses from 'a taste' a prejudice, a mannerism—I can answer only be deliberate and, I hope forceful, non-sequitur)¹⁸

To stand alone is not my problem. That is easily done.
Too easily.

'When all is called by its own name, yet there is nothing said' S Kierkegaard.

The moral issue: simply whether or not one is willing to know what he has said—or whether or not he is willing to say anything.

Thru Pound and Williams the young men have found a breaking of conventional forms, a releasing of speech which in the end will leave them outside the shelter of cliché. And that will lead them eventually to a reappraisal of Stevens and Eliot of the Quartets. For Pound and Williams are without intellectual interest.

++ There is also the question whether it is any longer possible for an artist or poet to be seen or heard unless he is part of a group. If a single artist, not a group, had produced the devastating art which has found the name Pop—Would he have been recognized at all? Perhaps there are too many claims on attention and response, perhaps no one is willing to take the pains to understand a poet or an artist or in fact to give him ~~any~~ ^{any} attention ~~at all~~ ^{to know what he is saying} without the assurance that one is thereby understanding an entire group at a single blow—. I think this is the reason for the extraordinarily delayed recognition of precisely those men whose work has most value. I raise this point because Bronk surely must be heard as himself, and not as a group.

++ Creeley is turning over and over in his poems the question whether two people can be faithful to each other. Well, as to that: yes, they can.

The scholastic philosophers: their systems would seem as permanent as the assumption—they would say the faith—on which they are based; the assumption of infinite being, which would seem a necessary fact provided one recognize the meaning of infinite as non-finite—a negative theology.

We would have to know the force which causes a thing to be—

++ They are scarcely seen, they are felt rather than seen, there is the greatest difficulty in making them felt by those who do not of themselves perceive them . . . and to judge rightly and justly of when they are perceived . . .

for the expression of it is beyond all men and only a few can feel it
Pascal

It is a question not likely to be answered. It cuts under theology also: at least, theology.

How it happens that there is such a thing as actuality

NOTES

1. "The individual wakes. . . ." a reflection on the phrase of French philosopher and theologian Jacques Maritain that Oppen had used as an epigraph to *The Materials*: "We awake in the same moment to ourselves and to things."
2. The ellipsis designates illegible writing.
3. From Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, Chapter One, Section One: "... it is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe, and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth. This character is its coherence."
4. "Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angel's / orders?" ["Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel / Ordnungen?"]: The opening of the first of Rainer Maria Rilke's "Duino Elegies."
5. "Diane" is Diane Wakoski. It is uncertain to whom the "you" here refers, although it is possible that Oppen is thinking here of the Guggenheim audience to whom he was introducing Diane Wakoski and William Bronk (April, 1966), drafts of which introduction are scattered throughout this daybook.
6. Cf. Section I of "Of Being Numerous" [*Collected Poems*, 147]
7. These comments allude to an early version of Oppen's poem "A Narrative" [*Collected Poems*, 132-140], originally entitled "To —." In her edition of Oppen's letters, Rachel Blau DuPlessis speculates that the excised name in the earlier title is Denise Levertov [*Selected Letters*, 383]. See also: *Selected Letters*, 86, where Oppen glosses the poem in a letter to June Oppen Degnan: "'To —' means, obviously in the first section, 'to a Lady Poet, to

the Domestic Poet, the poet of the happy ending—. By the end of the series it has come to be a sneaky way of saying 'to the universe.' And still, therefore, against the domestic poet. Suggests it really offers more hope, moreover; more basis for 'the good life.'" See also "The Mind's Own Place," which Oppen wrote out of a critical engagement with Levertov's poetry, and which concludes with a stark re-writing of one of her presumably "happy" endings.

8. Cf. Section I of "Of Being Numerous" [*Collected Poems*, 147]

9. Cf. Section 8 of "Of Being Numerous" [*Collected Poems*, 151]

10. In the first lines of "Philai Te Kou Philai," Oppen identifies Thomas Eakins's "The Thinker: Portrait of Louis N. Kenton" as a "portrait by Eakins / Of the Intellectual. . . ."

11. "Whistler's women:" an allusion to Whistler's series of paintings entitled "Symphony in White."

12. No indication is given as to whom Oppen is writing of here. Numerous statements elsewhere in the "Daybooks" and the "Papers" offer similar comments, although more general ones, on the pitfalls of poetic aspirations, and it is possible that the "he" here is hypothetical rather than specific.

13. Following precedent established by the militant black press at the time, Oppen abandoned use of the term "Negro" in the early 1960s, in favor of the term "Black," suggesting the date of this page's composition as before 1965.

14. Oppen may have participated—briefly and hesitantly—in an informal writing workshop in early 1966, although it is unclear who the other par-

ticipants were. Notes written in the margins of his introduction to Wakoski's and Bronk's reading at the Guggenheim in April of that year reflect similarly on his experience of such groups, against which, as it is clear, he reacted quite strongly.

15. It is unclear to whom Oppen refers here.

16. In a letter to June Oppen Degnan dated September 26, 1963, Oppen meditates, over three single-spaced pages, on Jung, writing frankly of his preference for Jung over Freud. See also SL: 91-93, especially 92. Unpublished letters and notes testify also to the preference.

17. In a May 1963 letter to June Oppen Degnan [SL 84-86], Oppen explicates an earlier version of "A Narrative" [See note 7 above]. The addressee here remains unknown, although it bears pointing out that among Oppen's idiosyncrasies in these papers is a tendency to blur the distinction between letters to others and notes to/for himself. This may be one such instance.

18. It is unclear to whom Oppen refers here.

AN APPEAL TO FICTION

Wayne Sullins

On the train from Kobe to Tokyo I tore up and threw five years of journals out the window. One page flew back and stuck to the glass long enough for me to read, 'This morning, fighting with my sister, I fell and drove my hand through the shoji and. . .'

Now I'm starting a new one. No day-to-day jottings, no lists of goals, no dreams. This time I'll write, 'You there, in Rekjavík, pounding the hood of your broken-down rent-a-car, when you were nineteen did you wake up like I do, swearing? I need to know.'

THE NATURE OF A SITUATION

Up at the crack of dawn, Colonel Farthington watches a man covering himself with the ashes of a girl trampled to death by the Queen's horses.

He has seen this man before; his matted hair hanging to his waist, his smile that of one cursed by the moon.

Yesterday, in his journal, Farthington wrote: 'To look at these people one would think they haven't the heart for open rebellion. But I fear it is we who must submit to the crushing realization that this jewel cuts deep, and leaves scars.'

The ash-covered man, crouching over the smoldering pyre, looks up to see the Colonel watching him.

'I have wandered near and far, Sahib,' he says, 'but I have never seen a man whose face is missing.'

DUEL

Captain James Oliver Priestly of Gloucester stands alone on the quarterdeck. Above him the stars have nothing to say. Below deck is another story—the crew singing songs of vice and corruption.

Tonight the Atlantic is undisturbed. While the Captain worries that Amanda, his wife, may be mistreating the greyhounds.

REINS, ANNALS

Liz Waldner

i.

There is a field. The last light falls on a field
and so it becomes the field of light. The field of light
drains as the sun drops to the mountaintop.
This is steepletop. Then was rain.

ii.

The pale nakedness of the birch,
I name it with the wanting of a body.
But first I knew it was beautiful,
or so it occurs to me to say.

iii.

In the afternoon, annular, the cloud
siphoned to earth by the alphabet of birch.
Multitudes of milk-white rivulets
channel shape-shifting drift,
in deft and elemental conversion
and, as with Tree in general,
a profound and utter
poise and fervor.

Say: prepare, for the light kingdom comes.
Pray: press your face to the tree's bright sex.
Send your white words up
through the channels of whiteness
running down the glass
of the great cow sky.

POSTILION OF AUTUMN

John Ashbery

A shower or two, and the old landscape
is good as new. A bit yellow in spots,
but that's what's called progress.
She hovers, lonesomely, like a zeppelin, over downcast
vales and trees, a free spirit, or something
like that.

We'd reached the end of the grove,
it was time to turn back, to find what we'd left behind
waiting for us. And it was good to see the scraps
of pleasure assembling into a face. By and large conduits
of reduced gauge carry the fiber optics better,
the chatting, the suspense, lorries of debris
haunted by the sometime catchall of these cisterns. It was darn
cozy in the Midwest, he'd wanted to say, but never
understood how a question can just go out
like a pilot light, leaving the need rubbed and raw
in hankered-after faces.

THEME PARK DAYS

Dickhead, they called him, for his name was Dong, Tram Van Dong. Carefully he slid open the small judas in his chest and withdrew a heart-shaped disc. It appeared to be cut from thicknesses of newspaper crudely stapled together. There was handwriting on one side, "spirit handwriting," he indicated with a motion of his head. Yet it all seemed for naught, ancient stock-market quotations or chalked messages on hoardings of the last century, with plus and minus signs featured prominently. "*O vos omnes*," he breathed, "blown together like milkweed on the hither shore of this embattled plain, will your feet soon mean to you what once they did? I think not. Meanwhile the tempest brays, favor is curried, the taffetas of autumn slide toward us over the frosted parquet, and this loquat heart is yours for the dividing. Sailboat of the Luxembourg! Vibrations of crisp mornings ripple ever closer, the joiner joins, the ostler ostles, the seducer seduces, nor stirs far from his crimson hammock. Delphic squibs caparison the bleak afternoon and the critics love it, eat it up, can't get enough of it. 'More pap! More pap!' Have a care, though, for what I tell you here must never ooze beyond the booth of our conniving. Yet it will spread, as surely as an epidemic becomes the element we have chosen to live in for good: our own infectious experiment."

THE TREES

Eugenio Montejo

The trees speak so little, you know.
They spend their entire life meditating
and moving their branches.
Just look at them closely in autumn
as they seek each other out in public places:
only the oldest attempt some conversation,
the ones that share clouds and birds,
but their voice gets lost in the leaves
and so little filters down to us, nothing really.

It's difficult to fill the shortest book
with the thoughts of trees.
Everything in them is vague, fragmented.
Today, for instance, on the way to my house
hearing a black thrush shriek,
the last cry of one who won't reach another summer,
I realized that in his voice a tree was speaking,
one of so many,
but I don't know what to do with this sharp deep sound,
I don't know in what type of script
I could set it down.

GUIGÜE 1918

to Juan Liscano

This is the land of my people who sleep, who don't sleep,
wide valley of cane fields opposite a lake,
and church bells mired with centuries of dust
that ghostly roosters echo through the night.
I am twenty years ahead of my own life,
I will not be born now since there is a plague in the village,
carts laden with corpses move off;
there are few ditches left open;
the bells tired of tolling for the dead
are brought down and lowered deep in wells.
I can see what's happening,
I will be born very far from this lake and its miasmas;
my father will leave with those who are left,
I will wait for him further on.
Now I am the light which sleeps, which does not sleep;
I can see it through the hollow of the walls.
Horses bogged in mud keep struggling forwards;
I can see the ink that copies down their names,
the wild calligraphy that mimics abandoned fields.
The plague will pass. Books in that yellow time
will imitate the leaves of trees.
I can touch the candle flames as they tremble
in processions passing by along the streets.
I am not going to be born here,
chalk crosses mark the doors
of those who don't want me to be born;

there is deep pain in the mud brick houses.
I can see it; I am twenty years ahead of my own life,
I'm the future that sleeps, that doesn't sleep.
The plague robs me of voices that are mine;
I shall have to reinvent every gesture, each word.

Now I am that light in the depths of his eyes;
I will be born later on, the date is already written.
I stay here with them as they say their farewells;
although they can't see me I remain in their presence;
I would like so softly to close their eyelids for them.

THE ROOSTER'S SONG

for Adriano Gonzalez Leon

The song is far away outside the rooster;
it's falling drop by drop inside his body
now he is sleeping in the tree.
All through the night it falls, does not stop falling
from the darkness between his veins and wings.
Uncontainable, the song fills the rooster
like a deep pitcher;
it fills his feathers, his crest, his spurs
until its enormous cry breaks the limit of his being
and rings out,
spilling without pause down the length of the world.
After that the rooster's breathing rests
and silence pulses, tense, solid.
Once again the song is there outside
scattered in the black wind.
Inside the rooster there is only entrails and sleep
and a small drop that falls in the depths of night
silently to the tic-tac of stars.

from EL TALLER BLANCO

Eugenio Montejo

"The crime against life," Archibald MacLeish said, "the worst of all crimes, is not to feel." Not to feel the world, not to feel life in its numerous mysteries and in the simplicity it shows at all times, forms in truth a deeply serious mutilation. Nevertheless, it's important not only to feel but to learn to feel, to learn to define the boundary between true feeling and simple arousal of emotion which is its most common and spurious substitute. "In the fully emotional man," W.B. Yeats tells us his father advised him, "the least awakening of feeling forms a harmony in which every chord of every feeling vibrates. Excitation is by itself of an insufficiently emotive nature, the common vibration of one or two chords alone."

To learn to feel: this task alone, which is nothing small, would do more to form a young poet than all the apprenticeship devoted to knowledge of literature, rules, fashions, etc. The manuals frequently forget this essential fact, without which every creative attempt is useless. Through feeling you can validly conquer the language which expresses it; feeling itself, when it is legitimate, creates its own form or the possibility of inventing it. The opposite, in contrast, is less probable. How to get down from the web of formalities to the simple nakedness of the world?

*

Reading the moving letters of John Keats you can see an alliance of innocence and knowledge—in the sense that he reserved for that word—similar to the echo of Hölderlin, and fatally distant now from our own days. I'm not referring to what his art succeeds in telling us, which I believe close to the

soul of all time given that his greatness makes it timeless, but to the sense of "earthly innocence" which makes it possible and which has vanished forever from us. The modern poet is tough, as Friedrich observes; he lashes out or makes jokes, begs or turns ironic, maybe because he knows he is separated from that innocent purity. It's something not easy to define, but which we see corroborated in the art of our time; maybe for that reason poetry has become more and more solitary. This idea could well be illustrated through propositions of Ungaretti ("I seek an innocent territory /country / place," "Poetry is a thirst for insatiable innocence") maybe the last great poet to center his work from this perspective. . . . But how distant from him appears Montale, his fellow countryman, for example. The press, the contemporary means of mass communication, seem to presuppose a pact of language, which we can accept or reject, but which it is not possible for us to avoid, unless we are a child, a madman, an "innocent."

*

Before the poem which is strictly ours we are weak. It is in it that resides the supreme force. What the poem demands is weakness to invade, therefore the power of reason is almost always an obstacle to it. The authentic poet learns to dismantle the resistance (and not to arm it, as the literary manuals advise); he creates mechanisms and reflexes of defenselessness so that the poem may invade him. In this way then, creation is passively feminine, and the more passive, the more deeply it contributes to giving birth to the poetic voice.

*

Dreams comfort us because they reveal the certainty, half lost, that while something dreams in us, the true poetic faculty remains intact. And it isn't

that dreams directly supply poetry, but one and the other, as we know, drink at the same fountain.

*

The poet tries to read God in his original language, convinced from birth that the foreign translations are of little use.

*

In all the words of a poem you must be able to read their necessity, that is one by one they should convince us that they are there because they are more necessary than other words which were not used, and, what is even more complicated, that they are more valid than silence itself. ("In art it is difficult to say something which would be as good as saying nothing," affirmed Wittgenstein.) Necessity constitutes the principle guide of the poet; nothing helps as much as feeling to clarify what is truly necessary.

*

Maybe not the greatest advice—what could be that?—but one that frequently comes back into my mind consists of a biographic detail of Paul Klee. From what it said, shortly before traveling to Italy he went through a deep adolescent crisis, recognizing that he had equal abilities for poetry, painting and music, without being able to decide to which of them he should devote himself. It was then that he said to himself: first of all succeed in being a man. Everything else will follow clearly from that.

*

What sometimes irritates in T.S. Eliot is that he almost always inserts

quotations from poets of the past in his verses, while he completely omits quotations from poets of the future.

*

The unavoidable theme, today's true poetic fact is the absurd possibility of atomic devastation, a possibility whose real threat is inseparable from every sensation and every thought. Man, any half-awake man, in our days suffers the terror of this risk, and more than any the poet, given that since antiquity he has fulfilled the role of lightning conductor. Nevertheless it is not necessary that every line refers to the possible extermination that approaches all of us. It's enough to recognize that in every object that forms the motive of his attention, the catastrophic ingredient is implicit to a degree completely unknown to artists of other epochs. Looked at this way, the apocalyptic notion has now become an extraordinary element of our modernity.

*

The poet has in common with the spider the art of creating form. Other animals also work in this way, like birds making their nest or bees in their hive, but with the poet as with the spider the form is secreted without outside help, in total solitude. The symmetry with which the spider reproduces a certain innate order is the basis for the survival of its species, as also, in the poet, language establishes a certain symmetry, which forms a definitely vital element for the survival of all.

*

Reading a poem my first curiosity consists in discovering the distance between the I of the speaker and the generic body of the words. It's a matter of an activity of verification which through my habits as a reader has become indispensable with the years. The distance I verify bears hardly any

relation to the quality of the poetic text; almost always it is independent of that, and at most constitutes a stylish sketch, a manner of positioning yourself before the poem's own individual space. Later a different related preoccupation works on me, that of knowing or discovering if that chosen distance is in the end fully justified in the total composition. (I think of Villon, the reprobate, speaking in the voice of his mother to Our Lady of Paris, an artificial distance doubtless, but thanks to his genius it becomes legitimate and convincing.) The rhythm, the tone, precision, and everything which contributes to the verbal accuracy of the lyric object, seem to me results of that distance, and, even more, results of the care taken to choose that distance as the most convenient at the time of ordering the poem's words.

*

Feeling is fertile because only it deeply illuminates us. Invention/cleverness distracts us, sharpens, polishes; it reaches the brain but not the soul. It enriches us with a false gold because it always leaves us with dangling stories. "Feeling is everything—said Goethe—man is sound and smoke."

*

The recommendation of T.S. Eliot that it is necessary to dedicate several hours a week to poetry through the whole of one's life is directed at the profession of poet, the artesanal, technical side, which in every art it is good to know and master. It's the common zone that the poet, the painter and the musician share with the patient artisans, as R. G. Collingwood lucidly analyzed in his book *The Principles of Art*. But, as he himself tells us, by itself it is not art or poetry. You can dedicate more time than Eliot advised without the result necessarily being artistic. There is, then, this other margin, the zone of the *daimon*, of Lorca's *duende*, for whom there are no formulas. Touching on this other side, the wise Eliot, "monarchic, classic and anglican,"

perhaps would not have stopped thinking of Psalm 127, according to which, “every success depends on divine protection. It is vain for you to get up early, to go to bed late, and to eat the bread of pain; it is Yahweh who in dreams gives bread to his chosen.”

*

The poem is a prayer spoken to a God who only exists while the prayer lasts.

—translated from the Spanish by Peter Boyle

Date

May 1, 1928.



Name

Herbert G. Bissell

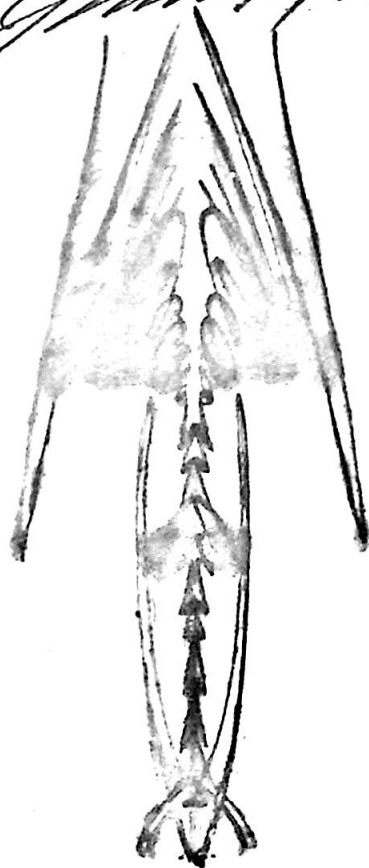
Date Nov. 7th 1934



Name Geline F. Tallmadge

Date

June 12/98.



Name

Charles Smith

Date *October 17th 1928.*



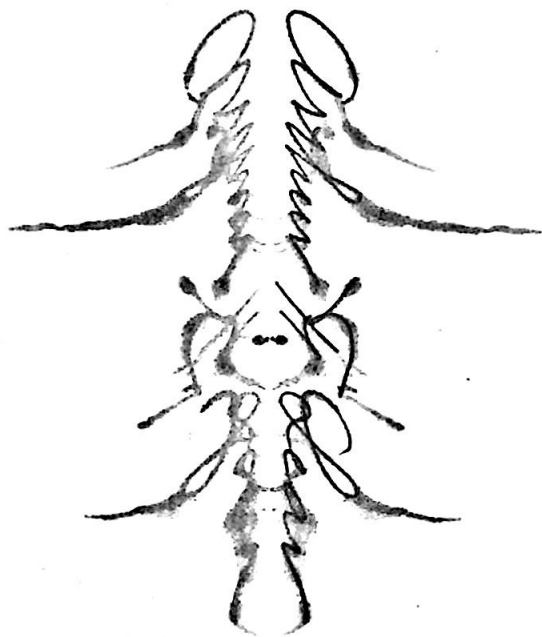
Name *Katherine L. Mattison*

Date May 2. 1928



Name Ch. H. Scrivener

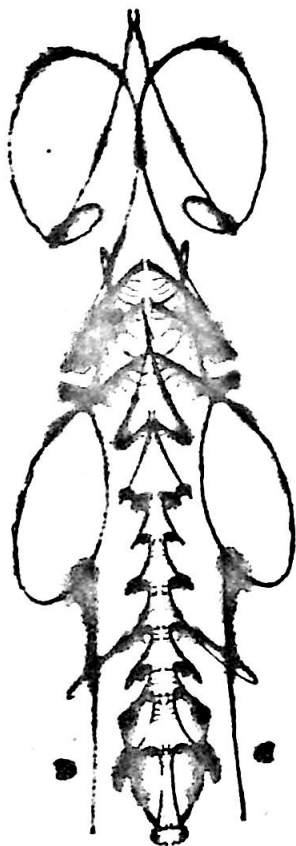
Date *Sept. 18th 1928*



Name *Arthur F. Leav*

Date

Oct 17-1928

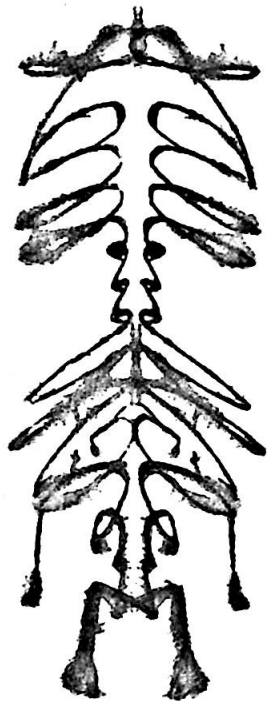


Name

A. L. Luntz

Date

May 3rd 1928



Name

John W. Wiley

Date *May 3, 1928*



Name *E. A. Bowen*

TOY ENTERPRISE

Joyelle McSweeney

The fake barn is made of a light-loving resin.
On the dark hill, it seems to float. In fact floats.
We drag in what we think might sell.

The guitarist with the burnt forearm,
the drummer fished up out of the world in which he was immersed,
the other guitarist who had fallen into furniture design

conversant. We then commence
a seven-hour gunfight, slow, schematic.
We rewrite the code to draw it out,
to keep it happening.
Baseball and everything goes on in one city.
Closing prices blossom from the shut city's fist.
How the day ended.

what's over
is packed inside the replicated ship:
 a stone oil lamp, a soapstone spindle, shiprivets, a bone needle,
 the Vikings' generally healthy lives.
The ship itself is suspended. When

the vocalist arrives and unlocks the door
we clock out.
He drives me down to the sharp end of the isthmus.
Sheets of green water bolt up over the sand
and fall back. Then up in a plane. we make plans
to ride horseback down the rice-levees. It's dove season.

TOY MATERNITY

Last year, like so many others
he bought racehorses on the bull market.
The darlings deflated

en masse. So I debuted
on next to nothing, one slipper
on the Turkish carpet,

half bustle and half wig.
The rescue vessel sinks itself
by filling its ballast tanks, slips

under the listing vessel, then surfaces
cargo and all. Therefore
he who believes in me

goes into me
and he who goes into me
has me. I of course refer

to that fleet of buried ships
the fourteen yellow prows
that carried the Pharaoh to the afterlife

and came back
mostly rotted, and to the smallest
body ever

orbited
that closest
that primitive body

TOY HOUSE

It lay on the sheet, I waited for it to move
under the grainy roof.

Plus, I measured the house it measured a reed
I measured the gate, a reed.

The angel intervened just once in all this time,
carrying my voice twelve miles. My rider came back
and took more formal leave.

I was plucky as the mail coach I was also the mud
that caught the letters dropping. That was the angel talking.

I say Wolves removed
to the lodgepole pine forests, can you
see those mudcaked hooves

TRY TO REMEMBER AND FOLLOW

Chris Jackson

McGivern, Promise, 72 x 60 in., acrylic and 24K gold leaf on canvas

You send before or forward the question of how
it's a better life all I say it is a little gold
leaf in a red field and you pretend to stand still
not whining for the masses then start speaking like
swans just wave your hands and they die at Jonestown
one little girl surviving by crying and your heart
what has been promised flips superfluous as

there's no afterlife no singing
orphanage or good dogs where you
come from happy as I am you can't

remember so when I say to you
gold leaf what I mean is don't
speak here's two words I promise.

INTERVIEW WITH DEAN YOUNG

Dean Young was born in 1955 in Columbia, Pennsylvania. He is the author of five books of poems: *Skid* (forthcoming, University of Pittsburgh Press); *First Course in Turbulence* (1999); *Strike Anywhere* (1995), which won the Colorado Poetry Prize; *Beloved Infidel* (1992); and *Design with X* (1988). He has received a fellowship from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, a Stegner fellowship from Stanford University, and two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. He splits his time between Berkeley, California and Iowa City. This interview was conducted by Robert N. Casper and Matthea Harvey on October 13-14, 2001.

The first line of yours that amazed me was "First you will fall in love with what you don't understand. The baby ram butts the shiny tractor." Do you think your poems are defined by misunderstanding?

I think they're very much about misunderstanding. There's that old writer's truism, "Write what you know"—well, you don't know very much. I think to tie meaning too closely to understanding misses the point. In graduate school, nobody understood what I was saying, and I didn't have a clue either. So, I wrote my first book to be understood, to be accepted. I got my father's ghost off my back. I got a job. I wasn't in graduate school anymore. And I realized that the poems in the first book weren't by me—they were instilled in my head. And that *not* being understood, *not* being accepted, was my subject.

In your forthcoming book, Skid, I was surprised to discover a sadness, even an edginess to the imagery, as in "You know not to hit the brakes on ice / but do anyway. You bend the nail / but keep hammering because / hammering makes the world."

I think my first two books were relatively austere. In the following books, I

tried to work toward celebration and joy and goofiness. But life conspires against you, hands you tragedy, proves that nothing can last. I think all of that is more apparent in *Skid* than it was in *First Course in Turbulence*.

In "Blue Garden" you write, "A poem should be / a noise and then it should shut up," which made me think about the brevity of lyric intensity. Do you think of poems as offering a kind of psychic burst?

Well, we spend so much of our time like dumb animals. Our psychology is a little bit flat, and we're consumed with the materiality of life: maintaining our bodies, getting things done, going here, going there. But then, when these portals of almost clairvoyant empathy open up for us, they're amazing. That's what we look for in art—the moment when something comes rushing in. All you have to do is make yourself available, accessible, perhaps in ways you haven't done before. Of course, you can't live in that state. There are also long periods when you can't find it, and they're terrible. They're like being in a desert. Everything you read just plays across your eyeballs.

Are there poets whose work gets you into that state?

Some of the French Surrealists do it for me, as well as Tomaz Šalamun, O'Hara, Lorca—poets whose vitality reminds me of the great joy of being able to make art, even when it's about terrible things.

What about a poet like Paul Celan?

Celan's poetry is a black hole for me. As the language of his poems becomes both more and more fractured and compact, it feels like less and less can escape. I admire that level of psychic concentration, but it's something I don't go to. I would pick up Keats or Hopkins before Celan, or Emily Dickinson. Emily Dickinson gives me a headache! There's definitely a greatness there, and something about the language is totally engaging—but

finally, it doesn't sustain me. Remember how Ashbery's "Three Poems," begins with something like, "I realized that I could either leave everything out or put everything in"? I want to put everything in. The critiques of representation, the critiques of manifestations of the self, the materiality of language—I look at all that stuff as opening up opportunities for shimmer and wobble, not as a form of negation. And, I'm constantly getting involved in meat.

Meat?

Yeah, meat, and parasols, and my cat.

The physicality of the world.

The junk of the world, which is maddening and wonderful. One great thing about the twentieth century is that any discourse can be poetic. Our goal as poets is to constantly demonstrate and renew that truth. For instance, in *First Course in Turbulence* I used mangled quotes from technical journals, which is not that incredibly experimental—it just allowed tones to confront each other. That kind of collage is fun because it can really undercut what I'm doing—and because I have absolute faith that I don't know what I'm doing. [Laughter] At some point I have to know what I'm doing, but that should be pretty far into the process.

What brings that realization on?

I don't know, I think the poem takes on some kind of density, and it starts to coalesce. I may feel like there's a particular trace in it—like a narrative trace—that I can highlight a little bit, to establish enough of a center of gravity so that other materials can be organized around it. Then I make selections in terms of musicality and measure.

Your poems often stray from their implied arc, introducing subjects and themes that make the reader ask with amazement, "How did that get in there?"

That's the only way I can keep things going; otherwise, it'll just end. Especially in longer poems I try to put so much *stuff* in until I think, "Alright, alright, this is so painful to re-type—I gotta just end it!" Robert Hass once said to me when you're writing a poem you're trying to get to a degree of energy where saying the opposite would have nearly the same effect. You could say the poem finds its ending—or it doesn't end, it just introduces us to silence. That's one of the things I love about poetry so much: it ends so often. That's why I don't read much prose.

I'm interested in the importance of Surrealism to your work.

Somebody asked George Bush, "What philosopher made the biggest impression on you?" and he said "Christ." I'd have to say Breton. To me, the manifestos of Surrealism offer a way to understand the imagination's powers and the limitations of logic, to explore the world as it's not and as it can be. Also, I find it relatively gratifying to be called a Surrealist because I read André Breton when I was in 7th grade. Breton wouldn't like me, though, because I'm not politically engaged enough, and I am very much interested in producing poems. He became infuriated with the notion that Surrealism would become an aesthetic rather than a philosophy.

Well, didn't the whole Surrealist movement fall apart under its own weight?

Yeah, Breton just started expelling people—like Éluard, who technically got expelled because he was too interested in poetry, though that rift really had to do with membership in the Communist Party. It was complicated and *utterly* dispiriting. Still, the idea of surrealism has been around forever—it just took Appollinaire to name it and Breton to theorize about it in a

convincing way. In the first week after September 11th, I heard the word “surreal” used more than I’d heard it probably in the last twenty years of my life, and I’m somebody who teaches Surrealism. It’s clear that we have encountered not just visions on a television tube, but a monstrosity of sudden fatality that was, in fact, surreal. Previously, when people used the word, they meant something that was silly and didn’t make any sense. Right now, however, surrealism is truer to its deep meaning in that it brings us into a very volatile and sometimes mutilating encounter with the irrational, and we are changed.

How do you think the imaginary and the real work in your poems?

Well, I hope the distinction between them, in the true Surrealist mode, is removed. The things that are very important to me can’t be defined as strictly either. Like love—you know, you love somebody—how can you say that’s real? I would say it’s imaginary.

You have a poem about Mary Ruefle, “Snowy Prairie Rabbit,” in which you talk about a child pretending to be a rabbit, which almost leads to her being a rabbit. At that moment you make it clear that the imaginary and the real are porous.

Yeah. That story is true, by the way—Mary told me. The only way she stopped thinking she was going to turn into a rabbit was by going to the doctor and getting imaginary treatment.

Do you think being funny is deadly serious?

You know, there’s not much difference between the comic and the tragic. It’s just a body count. In Hamlet, if you take away the last act and the sorry thing that happens . . . OK, there are a lot of bad things that happen. But Polonius is one of Shakespeare’s great comic figures, and Hamlet himself has a dreadful fear that his life’s about to turn into parody. They’re a lot closer than they are far apart.

And you try to have them both in your work?

Always.

In Shakespeare's plays, I've always found the most compelling character to be the fool. He gets to say in riddling ways the very things no one else will acknowledge.

Yeah, but there's also a great sense of risk for the fool—at any moment he can cross the line and get hung. That's part of the energy. Just the possibility of going too far, of *really* saying the thing that cannot be said—and there being no amount of stylistic innovation that's gonna save him.

What do your poems risk saying that cannot be said?

Oh, I'm not doing that. I think anything can be said. There's been a sort of corollary national discussion lately about the end of irony in this country, because of the tragedy. I'm not the first one to point out that the murderers were very certain, very secure in what they believed. I think what we need in this world is more comic detachment, more irony, which is, you know, a form of dissent. And if there's one thing that makes this country infuriating, but also great, it's the way dissent was included and guaranteed in its very conception.

It does seem like there are things that poems can say now that other forms of expression aren't allowed to say.

Well, I don't know if poems really have a social value, except to express the liberation of sensibility and the possibility of an imaginative inner life. They're not useful in the way we expect most writing to be. The success of a novel is based upon the fact that people can disappear into it. And then novels are made into movies, which completely authenticates them because narrative is the coin of our entertainment realm. Poems don't do that. In

fact, the most interesting poems are the ones that present a narrative and then disrupt it. Poems always ask you to look further or look deeper; they don't let you off the hook. They're not a very good form of entertainment, which means that we are completely at liberty. I think that's the most important thing, and I'm sometimes disappointed in American poetry for not realizing or trying to realize the full extent of its liberty.

Thinking of poems not as product, but as process . . .

Yes. I think the making of poetry is more important than poetry. When I read poems I'm concerned about the notion of making them, and I want to be included in that process. I think the demonstration of a process that includes us in it offers the reader liberty of mind.

Your poems have a strong sense of voice, but a voice aware of the artificial form it's speaking through.

In my poems, there is usually some vestigial evidence that the narrative voice is aware of itself as a construction, but it may break through that construct-
edness to approach something which seems, at times, a lot like sincerity. I also think they ape other forms of discourse in which there would be an addresser and an addressee. The whole fact of somebody listening to me—or a group listening to me—seems utterly comic and ironic. Why would people listen to me? What could I possibly have to say to them? It seems like a situation that is absurd from the get-go, and absurdity gives a person a fair amount of freedom. For one thing, if the situation is absurd, one can say extremely serious things.

Is that why you often write teacherly poems?

Well, it presents a paradigm around which to structure the fake address of a poem. Ironically, you can infer a lot of pre-existent knowledge on the part

of that audience. You pretend they have it. They don't have it. They know you're pretending as a way of hoping they will get it at some point.

Do you find that happens often in teaching?

I think so. I know it happened to me a lot when I was a student. It's teaching by vacuum: you create an empty space which you hope gets filled by the students' desire to know what you're talking about.

You hope that they can follow along and figure out a way to make that leap?

Yeah. I'm not much of a Socratic teacher. The Socratic method is a lot like being taught by a three-year-old. As far as I can tell, the role of the teacher is to provide resistance. You try to shape students' knowledge, and shape is created by resistance. They can either embrace what you're saying, or resist and overthrow it. Either way it's good news, because they have to commit—and they realize there is a choice, not just this big flabby emptiness out there where there's no up or down, left or right. On the other hand, in the third grade everyone's a Surrealist.

Explain.

Well, when I taught in the "Poet in the Schools" program I discovered that third graders encounter the world with a sense of newness, and meaning has not really bound up words so that they get stuck. Third graders are just as ready to say, "A cow is flying on fire" as they are, "A cow is standing in the field." They are aware of a transformational possibility in the world, and of how the imagination is always nudging that. This is partly because they don't have a fully developed social sense—they're not fully civilized. In the fourth grade, this changes: they begin to realize where they stand in various pecking orders, social orders. To realize that girls are very different from boys. So they pull to be a member of a group, and one way to assure one's

membership is to use words conventionally. In fourth grade they want to be cool, they don't want to say queer things. However, for some people that imaginative freedom remains alive throughout their lives.

How do you contend with the first person—is the “I” you?

The “I” is probably very similar to me, probably more me than I realize. But it is also a grammatical construction around which various language events and stolen riffs can organize themselves.

How about speaking of yourself in the third person—what does it allow you to do?

It lets me express some of the cool ambivalence I have towards this character. I also think it's funny to treat oneself as an object. I've had to stop—I could just do it all the time.

Well, Dean starts out vacuuming in Skid. You also have Dean the weatherman . . .

He shows up fairly regularly.

And “Dead Dean.”

There's a whole slew of dead Dean poems—thank God there's only one in the new book. I wrote a poem about “What Do We Do With the Body of Dead Dean?” that didn't make it. You have to find a way to make stuff manageable. I had something go wrong with me physically that was kind of serious. I got better—but it's still something that's with me all the time. So now death is personal in a way that it wasn't before. My father died of heart problems when he was forty-nine, and apparently I have his heart. However, medicine is so much better now. You know, one mustn't lose one's sense of the full spectrum of life. It's good material for a joke.

Certain animals—such as swans and crows—show up in your work so often that they begin to seem like symbols. When do you use a swan, and when do you use a crow?

That's a great question. A swan should be used when you're in the vicinity of a magnet, and a crow should be used only when you're hungry . . . Actually, I have no idea. They're very different creatures—swans are much scarier.

Most people would probably think crows are scarier.

Yeah, well, crows are among the brightest birds. They just don't give a shit. They have hardly any kind of social organization. You've got to admire them. They're just real fuckoffs—they're the sophists of the natural world. Don Juan says that one in five crows you see is actually a sorcerer. But, I don't think that's true anymore because sorcery has died out. Every now and then maybe a swan is Zeus. I don't know about you, but I try to give Zeus a really wide berth.

In Skid there's a poem I love, "Shamanism 101," which ends "clamoring over the crumb that I think/is the world, baffled by the splotch / of one of my own crushed kind, / almost sweet, a sort of tar, / following a trail of one or two molecules, // leaving a trail / of one or two molecules." It's an elegant, and moving, evocation of an ant.

If we divorce our notions of scale from notions of size, there's no reason to think that an ant's life is not as complicated, as full of triumphs and terrors and needs, as ours is. Once you start thinking about that, once you start looking into the eyes of a giraffe, or once you look into a pig's eyes, for me it has to mean, one, I should probably stop eating meat, but two, that the world is just full of these beasts that are having these amazingly intense lives. Anyway, I've been nearsighted almost my entire life, and I've always been fascinated by microscopic things. When my wife Neal and I go

for hikes, my head's usually down. I'm always looking at the bugs and lizards and snakes, and she's always seeing the hawks.

What do you really think an ant's life is like?

That's a hard one, because it depends on what kind of ant you are. If you're a soldier ant, or a drone—one of the big group of flying male ants that follow the new queen as she leaves the colony and try to mate with her in the air and then fall to the ground—it's a particular kind of mythic enactment of male being. That's it for them. She gets enough sperm to do the colony for the rest of her life. Then she just lays eggs and decides what sex they need to be.

How?

Good question. Maybe it has to do with population density—people are studying that.

And you're reading the books by the people who are studying that, right?

Yeah, and then mis-remembering it. Getting it all wrong.

So she just lies there and produces children?

And gets groomed—she has ants which solely groom and feed her, and when she lays eggs they carry them away. You know, she's just huge. Sometimes there's a palace takeover, and the soldiers will surround her. They won't kill her—they just partition her off, and she dies. They put her in the tower basically, the old queen. All the weirdness you've read about the kings in England is *nothing* compared to what happens with ants.

You have some poems that zoom out as opposed to in, like the title of your poem, "Upon Hearing of My Friend's Marriage Breaking Up, I Envision Attack from Outer Space."

Well, you just try to create as much of a dynamic drama in the work as possible. Radically shifting focus is like that. A lot of people can't stand my work because of those kinds of gestures, but they're what I find interesting. To me, an ant is as big as a cathedral. And, if you go to a hamburger joint, the large is actually the small—because it's large, and then super large, and then colossal. You know, everything in the world says that we should be getting smaller. For instance, we should be driving smaller cars because there's more of us, and the elephants need more room.

If your poems were machines, what would they be like?

That makes me think of Jean Tinguely and his crazy machines! I love him. I'd like my poems to be machines without a clear purpose. They run for a little while, they may hurt you or hand you a candy bar or blow up.

What other visual artists do you admire?

Oh, Duchamp—of course it's ironic to call him a visual artist. Cy Twombly, a lot of the Surrealists. And De Kooning—I love De Kooning.

Cy Twombly is a surprise!

He's my current favorite. I find his work unexplainably beautiful—it's those scrawls. I remember when I first saw them, I thought, "What the fuck?" But I have tried to copy the scrawls, and they're impossible to do. He gets himself into a place of writing—I think his paintings are very written—that I find extraordinary. His work recalls our scrawl when we're learning to write, but it's also incredibly articulate and refined. His paintings just knock me out.

What about Duchamp?

His ability to move back and forth between the random and the highly intended is wonderful. You gotta love “The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors” just because it’s so powerfully strange. And all the processes he did to make that thing, like the painstaking labor of putting gold foil over dust and the little cannon he made to fire matchsticks. I also like “With Hidden Noise.”

What’s that?

A ball of twine. The piece has two metal plates, and something inside that would make noise if you could shake it—which we’re not allowed to do, of course. Duchamp himself didn’t know what was inside the piece—he had Walter Arenberg put something in there. Duchamp is one of those artists who undermines everything. Also, he thought about three things all his life: art, chess, and sex.

The end of your poem “I Can Hardly Be Considered a Reliable Witness” made me laugh out loud: “It’s frustrating, / like hiding stolen jewelry in tubs of lard. / Sure it works, but have you ever tried / to get grease off a brooch, / or geese out of a coach for that matter. / They have to be heavily sedated, / and it’s weeks before they can even float right.” It’s rare to see that kind of associative leap pulled off from a rhyme.

Oh, thanks. It’s a clear instance of mismanagement, to allow the stupid rhyme.

But you follow it—and the last line still connects to the poem, even though you’ve gone in a wildly different direction. How do you feel about rhyme?

I love it—how, in a Hopkins poem, rhyme comes from a surplus, a flood.

I don't like poems in which rhyme is waited for and organized, because to me music is disruptive. And I don't like counting—often formal poems use rhyme to demonstrate a finesse and manipulation I don't find engaging.

So you never write sonnets?

Sure, but they're never any good. I don't see why a poem should have 140 syllables in it! Whatever cultural imperative was there—and I think it's still there for some people—it's just not for me.

You're the only poet I know of who thanks Castro del Sol and Van Morrison in your acknowledgements page. What is the role of pop music in your work?

What interests me most about music is the way it's constructed, the way it's amassed out of strange bits. For me, lyrics are secondary—I hardly ever catch up to them unless I'm trying to sing along. I loved all of those 70s art rock bands, like Yes, King Crimson, and Genesis. In fact, I still listen to them. It's music that's full of tonal shifts and interesting weirdnesses. I love weird music. Periodically, I hunger for a straightforward rock song, but it's not the thing that's sustained me.

How do your poems construct their own form?

Through dispersion, maybe. [Laughter] By that I mean, when I'm alive there are a billion things flying into my head at one time, and I want to capture all that—that sense of excitement and disaster and calamity and terror and beauty and love and desire, which is related to all this everyness flying all around in different directions. But for a work of art to have shape, there must be an inside and an outside, a selection process working against dispersion. That has to do with manifestations of gravity. Gravity is created by mass, and mass can be created in a poem stylistically.

How does that work?

In the primordial mass of musicality and weird images, you can look for various kinds of lines, syntactic parallels, stylistic things—lexical ridges and links and tensions which say, “This can go in the poem, and this can’t.” Another way to do it is thematically, and there are certain subjects which have immense mass for us. Death. Love. These are themes of many, many poems. One of the things the avant-garde has done for us is lighten that thematic density up a little bit. That sounds like a contradiction, but it’s now possible to have thematic density around buying a loaf of bread. There is, of course, a downside. If you decide, “Everything can go into this poem,” you immediately think, “Why bother? It doesn’t matter.” The downside of thematic gravity is its tendency to shut the poem up and make it seem as profound as a stone, without life or breath.

Are you a big Wallace Stevens fan?

Yes. I love Stevens’ musicality and humor, the way he comes close to gibberish and nonsense. Sometimes he just spills over in it—but he webs it to real thinking. I’m amazed at the way he puts words together. I mean, my God, his lexicon! He’s one of those poets you can just pick up every now and then and feel like you’re going through a car wash. He just buffs you up.

Do you think there’s anything that can’t go in a poem?

I wish there was something I felt I could never put in a poem because I would immediately try to put it in one. That would be extremely inspiring, but no, I don’t think non-poetic discourse exists, so I can’t imagine there being anything you couldn’t put in a poem. But there are some things we write poems in spite of. Right now I feel like I’m writing poems in spite of the position of the world, and what may happen, and what has already happened. I do believe we have to write through the unwritable, but I’m

trying to concentrate on all of the things we write because of. Robert Bly wrote somewhere that in America we have forgotten how to write poems of praise. And I really think that to write poems that are of joy or that have joy in them is something I want to do, and it's very important to know that this is not unimportant, not un-serious, not lesser.

Your poems often include statements like "I wasn't put on this earth to explain," or "You are not the first to ask me to describe this darkness." Do you feel like your poems themselves are explanations?

I think they're more demonstrations than explanations. An explanation is always secondary to the thing. I hope they're the primary thing. I hope they are evidence.

PEACH FARM

Dean Young

I felt pretty stupid in brown pants,
brown jacket, shirt, shoes and tie
at the peach farm. I cast them off!
The young peaches clung to the limbs
like sag-resistant muscles.
It's a good place to have a pony. Ditto
a heartbeat, something long, a Spanish-
English dictionary and lots of water
to remove stickiness. Bees are encouraged,
so too worms in the soil and every evening,
bats. Quadratic equations, not so much so.
Only an old dog is buried there.
I can't find the anvil
but then "Go find the anvil"
turns out to be some kind of joke
at the peach farm. The owner started paying
for the peach farm by selling a motorcycle
then selling peaches. Walking through the trees—
how different from looking for a Ph.D.
Yet also not. One good thing about
being unable to sit beside you
is seeing the back of your head in the leaves.
How far we are from kissing
our damage deposit goodbye.

GRAY MATTER

Some part of me is disappointed
when the execution's stayed.
I say I want blue water
but I want everything muddy.
Maniacs trained as mechanics,
nymphs dashing through corporate plazas
like correction tape. Church towers—
what a good hiding place
for a slaughterhouse.
At the end of 4,000 years,
the scientists say into the cameras,
We've only been able to discover
15 ounces of decency, maybe more
in the future if the money keeps coming.
Then they turn back through the door
to the basement where the wine's kept cold
and children send each other on dares.
There are parts of the human brain
even carp spit out.

LIVES OF THE ROBOTS

Green fluid drools from my shoulder.
I can't carry the tray I'm supposed to
and you know what they do to broken
robots, don't you? They pop their heads.
They yank out their uranium and belts.
They donate parts to art schools so
bug-brained sculptors can spot-weld
awful stupid things left to rust
in the backyards of houses where only
art students have lived so long,
the houses have forgotten everything
but the drunk names nicked into
their hardwood. The stars over such houses
don't bother. A crow made of the husks
of crows, police cruisers' mechanical
fins flickering out of the dark. You sleep
on rubber sheets because big genitalia
keep coming to get you, grasshoppers
clinging to the screens like transmitters,
you can hear the owls lying to you,
the brake factory releasing green steam,
the beautiful rhetoric pouring from
the conquerors' porcelain mouths.
They lied to you about what they knew
and they lied to you about what they didn't.
They told you to put down your sword
and welcomed you into the city. They said
you'd get used to the subterranean din,

the chalky residue, suspicious meats,
suspicious glues. And when what they told you
you wanted you got and stopped wanting?
And what they told you you needed
you didn't want to need? Which
of the swallowed poisons do you try
to bring back up, which best left
to pass through? There's the truth-sounding
lie and the lie that makes no sound,
dropped to depths unilliminable.
My father lied to me about my reward.
My mother lied to me for my own good.
At least turn me over so I can see the sky.

LIVES OF THE ORPHANS

I wasn't getting mail at either place.

During his space-walk, the spaceman
gets disconnected and floats away.

I get ideas like that sometimes
just drinking juice or while on hold
and they're playing that lost-spaceman music.

My mother taught me to be afraid
of radiators by hurting me not too much.
I'm afraid of elevators all on my own.

For months I worked in a helmet.
Everything tasted off. The glass eye
bugged me, the syphon. I found a green pen

at the crashsite and tried to write
but it wouldn't let me describe
even the flinty birds outside,

they were always turning into something else,
lightbulb filaments, birthstones, songs
coming from a hole in the lake,
hardly ever any blood.

When she found her sad trumpet again,
the mother's powers were restored.
Or so they swore to my brother
to get him to close his eyes.

RUSHING THROUGH THE NIGHT

What you wait for rushes through the night.
Darkness rushes through the summer night
so fast, now it is nearly light. He holds
her hand, presses as much as he can see
over her sleeping body. The owl rushes back
to its nest to regurgitate mice.
So many cars rushing through the night
into the city with its buildings stuck in the ground.
He looks at his hands, they seem like someone else's,
older, unjoking. He drinks espresso
watching the moon. A warrior, singing
of his failure, turns the blade into himself
and a red cloth is dragged across the stage.
Death holds him down with its back paw.
But it has to make it another 300 miles
says the young couple to the mechanic
found in the desert night. Pluto passes
within the orbit of Neptune, messing up
the mnemonic device. The blastocyst rushes
through the night of the fallopian tube
into the lush red morning of the endometrial lining.
On the hanger, the black dress doesn't look like much.
The mind is made of silver dots.
The heartbeat stops. The woman is alone.
A dog runs down the alley.
Finitude, earth, stars, a river into trees.
Rushing through the night, they sit very still,
unable to rise and turn on a light

because of the heavy thing between them.
Finitude, smoke, a cool breeze,
only the black keys. Sleep, there is nothing
more that can be done. Sleep, tomorrow
you'll go to the sea.

THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTERS' DISHES OF CHINESE EMPEROR

A Menu by the Grand Sichuan Int'l Restaurant

From last year until now, we have been playing the video tapes that show the Chinese TV series "The Prodigal Princess of Chinese Emperor." All of us have enjoyed the TV series very much and at last we decided to cook eight dishes from the TV series.

This TV series was on the top in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan for almost the last two years. The TV series tells the story of a Chinese royal family around 250 years ago. The Emperor, named Qian Long in the Qing Dynasty, once met a young girl in the South of China and stayed together only for a few days. After the Emperor went back to Peking, the capital of Qing, they had no chance to meet again for the rest of their lives. However, the young girl who was the Emperor's lover had a baby girl the next year. The baby was named after "Purple Rose." Twenty years later, the Emperor's lover was very sick. Before she died, she told her daughter to go north to Peking and to look for and reunite with her father, the Emperor. On her way to Peking, another beautiful young girl called Little Swallow became her best friend.

The funniest thing is that Little Swallow first met and was wrongly recognized by the Emperor as a prodigal daughter, and the real prodigal daughter, Purple Rose, worked as Little Swallow's close maid. Under this wrong relationship, both girls accompanied the Emperor to go on a private visit in China. One day they were riding through a place where there were hills, a river, and grasslands. The Emperor was so glad that he wanted to have a

The Prodigal Daughters' dishes of Chinese Emperor

1. Green Parrots with red mouth — whole spinach with fresh ginger sauce or red oil (cold dish).
红嘴绿鹦哥: 姜汁红油菠菜. 4.95
2. The growing grass in Spring must be like green and threaded silk — Sichuan cold spicy and sour vegetables.
韭菜炒银丝: 四川凉拌素菜. 5.95
3. The mulberry trees bent their green branches — Sautéed green celery, spicy pepper and squid with black beans.
素菜银丝: 芹菜炒鱿鱼. 9.95
4. We would be two love-birds flying wing to wing on high — Sautéed baby chicken pieces with fresh ginger and spicy.
飞天喜鹊: 姜蒜鲜鸡丁. 10.95
5. The white-feathered egrets flying over broad water fields — Sliced large shrimp over soft bean curd in brown sauce.
白鹅: 白片大虾: 豆片鲜虾仁. 12.95
6. Yellow orioles warble high in the shadowy Summer woods — Divergent bean curd with green vegetables.
黄鹂: 豆片鲜菜. 10.95
7. Phoenixes come to sing once on phoenix terrace — Red cooking whole quail over sliced winter melon.
凤凰台上凤凰鸣: 红泥焗鲜安福鸡. 12.95
8. The phoenixes are gone but still roll on the river's waves — Duck soup with sliced turnip and pork, spicy sauce on the side.
凤凰台上凤凰鸣: 罗氏片鸭骨汤. 7.95

picnic along the river. The two young girls tried to find anything they could and cooked eight dishes for the Emperor. The most interesting thing was that the real prodigal daughter named each dish by a sentence from famous ancient Chinese poems. Each dish, in one way or another, more or less, matched the meanings of the poetic sentence. Each dish expressed the beauty of the poem and Romanticism.

Now we adapt these eight dishes and their poetic names. However, we have recreated these dishes with Sichuan ingredients and style. We hope our patrons will love these dishes and enjoy reading these poems at the same time.

1. GREEN PARROT WITH RED MOUTH

Whole spinach with fresh ginger and red spicy oil. However, the name sentence is not from a poem. The dish is a typical Sichuan cold dish. The whole spinach with the major part of its root to be cooked and cooled, then placing the spinach leaves into the plate the same way and then pouring the fresh ginger and red oil on the top and served. The name sentence is also a metaphor to the dish: Chinese very often compare the spinach to a green parrot and the red roots to the parrot's mouth.

2. THE NEWLY GRASS IN SPRING MUST BE LIKE GREEN AND THREADED SILK

Sichuan cold spicy and sour vegetables. Vegetables like carrot, cabbage, green pepper and so on are threaded, cut, and mixed with spicy and sour sauce. It is a typical family cold dish. The poem sentence describes the new grass in Spring is so green and tender that it is like green and soft silk. The sentence is from the poem "A Wife Longs For Her Husband in Spring,"

written by Li Bai (lived from 701-762 AD in the Tang Dynasty). He is considered number one of the greatest poets in the history of China and his poems observed the style of Romanticism.

3. THE MULBERRY TREES BENT THEIR GREEN BRANCHES

Sautéed green celery, spicy pepper and squid with spicy black beans. This sentence, like Sentence #2 (above), comes from the same poem written by Li Bai. The sentence describes that the mulberry trees in Spring grow new leaves and bend their branches in Spring wind. The wife saw everything new in Spring and was long for her husband who was away with family. The original dish in the TV series only had vegetables and no spice. Now we make some changes: threaded celery and green pepper are compared to green branches, and cut squid to mulberry. Thus, the dish matches the poem.

4. WE WOULD BE TWO LOVE-BIRDS FLYING WING TO WING ON HIGH

Sautéed baby chicken pieces with fresh ginger and spices. The poetic sentence comes from the poem "The Ever Lasting Regret," written by Bai Juyi (772-846 AD). Bai lived in Tang Dynasty around 1200 years ago. He is considered one of the greatest poets in the history of China. This poem describes a miserable story of a Tang Emperor and his lover. The story started as happiness and ended as a tragedy. The poet wished the Emperor and his lover would be the love-birds flying wing to wing in the city after their death. In the TV series, the dish was two whole chickens that matched the meaning of the poem. However, we just sautéed the baby chicken pieces with soft bone in spicy fresh ginger and scallion. Sometimes we put some garnish that symbolizes the two chickens on it. It tastes spicy, salty, and mixed a little sweet.

5. THE WHITE-FEATHERED EGRETS FLYING OVER BROAD WATER FIELDS

Sliced shrimp over soft bean curd in brown sauce. The poem sentence comes from the poem "Written at the Rural Retreat at Wangchuan During a Prolonged Rain," which was written by Wang Wei, who lived in the Tang Dynasty from 701-761 AD. He was a very important and famous poet in the history of China. With our dish, we compare the brown-sauce covered bean curd to the water field and the cut large shrimp to the white egret. This is a beautiful light sautéed dish.

6. YELLOW ORIOLES WARBLE HIGH IN THE SHADOWY SUMMER WOODS

Olivary bean curd with green vegetables. This poem sentence comes from the same poem as #5. The sentence says that the yellow Orioles sing in the woods in Summer. Here we use the long cut green vegetables as the "Summer woods" and the olivary bean curd as the yellow orioles. We powder the bean curd and baby shrimp and mix them to make the olivary shape. That means "olivary bean curd." The dish is light in color and taste. The olivary bean curd sautéed with green vegetables allegorizes the "Orioles warble in Summer woods."

7. PHOENIXES CAME TO SING ONCE ON PHOENIX TERRACE

Braised whole quail over winter melon. The poem sentence also comes from the poem "On Phoenix Terrace on Jingling," written by Li Bai. The whole poem says the phoenixes used to sing on the terrace. Now the phoenixes

were gone and the terrace is still here. The wild grass grew very high and the old earth tombs were almost worn out. The poet could not see the capital and felt very depressed. The whole poem was at a very sad mood. However, the first sentence of the poem is the name of our dish: the whole quail is like the flying phoenix and large sliced cut winter melon at the bottom of the plate is like the "Terrace." Certainly the phoenixes are flying on the phoenix terrace.

8. THE PHOENIXES ARE GONE BUT STILL ROLL ON THE RIVER WAVES

Duck soup with sliced turnip and pork. The soup compares to the river and the duck bone in it means the gone phoenixes. The poem sentence came from the same poem as dish #7. Dish #7 says the phoenixes used to sing on the phoenix terrace. This dish says that the phoenixes are gone and the terrace was empty and the river was flowing like before. The poem described the scene and the feeling of the loss, sadness and the loneliness. Very often we have the same feeling. We used to have power, rights, future, happiness, and so on. Now, we lost all of these. How do we feel?

THE FARMER WHO LOWED

Russell Edson

It was possible to grow flesh directly from the earth. Now no need for hooves or horns . . .

A harvest of boneless blobs lying in the fields like watermelons covered with cowhide; their roots umbilical cords . . .

Sometimes a throwback like an unfinished memory. One with horns, another with eyes. One lowing secretly inside itself. Sometimes just an udder swollen with milk . . .

The farmer looking over his fields squints against the setting sun and begins to low . . .

WHAT IT IS OF THE WOOD

There was an old woman who would open her shawl and glide in a wood, squatting now and again on the branch of a tree to do urine.

Her husband asked her what it was of the wood.

I go to the bathroom there, the facilities are really quite modern.

But we have indoor plumbing, he remarked.

Indoor plumbing? Where?

In the bathroom.

In the bathroom? she squealed.

It's been there for years, he remarked.

For years? Oh goodness, now I really have to pee, she squealed as she jumped out of a window, flying for the wood trailing a long ribbon of toilet paper into the trees . . .

BAD NIGHT GOOD DAY

Paul Éluard

I dream I obey the orders of the night
I change the newborn feathers of my birth to lead
I made a pure crystal a deaf crystal in darkness

Silence grows along the dead branches
In dreams the whiteness of your flesh burns me.

*

The sun enters the heart of the trembling room
Behold our love that doubles in the broad daylight that embraces itself
And its long caress makes us understand everything

The cool fire of dawn is filled up from a single body
Yours I am blinded enough to believe in it.

THE DESPAIR NEED TO LOVE

On the side of evil:

The storm aborts the rain falls off
And the sun makes a hollow sound
Blow little pigs cry crows
Youth drools in cellars

The black cold settles down in little windows
He who cannot fully live lives a little
Knowledge gives alms to ignorance
Rust has golden roots

Beautiful flesh is a thorn
The lip freezes in a kiss
One slides in the mud of the heart
The dead live in palaces

Whoever you are grab a weapon
And avenge yourself of this disaster
The mirrors have multiplied
So that one evening you cease to see yourself in them.

On the side of good:

Wonder it is to love again
In spite of that unlimited wall
As a miner who ponders day
During the day his heart inspires his climb
You are not there your heart exists
And the stars of your hands
Although concealed are always present

See the poet transforms himself
I dream I have always dreamed
Of dusk in negative
And the wonder
Not to have been born to be nonexistent
But you are worth having been
And being in spite of nothingness

I know your breasts I know your heart
Your eyes that open in my eyes
Even though I am an old blind man in my dreams
To love you sing loudly enough at night
To light up a world
Other than the world of my own life
Loving you links me with mankind.

CLOCK OF SECRET WEDDINGS

On the side of evil:

Why must I always fall asleep
Why must the night devour me

I am unable to go without a halo
It hurts to be without a crown

But when I sleep soft chimes sound
My indolence hangs on their rope

I dream of the breast of my dead youth.

*

Then time gives birth to a new order
Order of fall with twisted foliage

I am born I die I open and close the door
I am at the heart of what dies from blooming

I do not know how to leave from where I start off
Neither how to see anything of my sad future

I adorn my sheets with a distorted scowl.

On the side of good:

Over the delicate sky enormous clouds
Broke the flow of monotonous dreams

And when the storm on fire made a face
I was breathing darkness I was taking form

I conceived the earth that I worship
I was like everything that I name

I fortified the earth that forgives.

*

A thousand songs of grapes and apples
Bedecked all words with fruit

A thousand voyages of animals and men
Sought out the day on the earth without limits

Night kissed the lips of dawn
The flowers were opening under the frantic light

I was radiance I was weakness and strength.

—translated from the French by Lisa Lubasch

from GAMES OF LONELINESS

Nurit Zarchi

THE MAN SITTING AT THE WRITING DESK

Outside a path sloped down toward the house, fenced off on one side by dark trees, perhaps cypresses, immeasurably tall—if you were short, as might be expected of a child—with one or two pepper trees that would be distinctly remembered for the sticky smell of their clusters of fruit. On the other side, the path pressed close to the wall.

But the inside of the house, amounting to a kind of low cube, appears to me as though sunk in a flood of darkness obliterating the details of the rooms and the walls. Memory lights up the silent gaze of a tiny angel, so transparent that it almost melts into the darkness—as in those Flemish paintings depicting the inimitable birth, the one where a bull and a cow stand in the back of the room, watching with their soft eyes shining. This same memory, like a flickering ray of light, flutters on and off, sheds golden light now in this corner and now in that one—dredging up and saving from complete submersion parts of the lost continent known as childhood. It may be that I would not remember the nights I awoke because of a childhood disease, just as I do not remember where the bed, the large dining table and the armchair stood, if I had not read a book in which Proust describes the moment when a sick child awakens:

O joy of joys! it is morning. The servants will be about in a minute: he can ring, and someone will come to look after him. The thought of being made comfortable gives him strength to endure his pain. He

is certain he heard footsteps: they come nearer, and then die away. The ray of light beneath his door is extinguished. It is midnight; someone has turned out the gas; the last servant has gone to bed, and he must lie all night in agony with no one to bring him any help.¹

Memory isn't knowledge, you may know without remembering; in my case it is the knowledge of memory, and not memory itself, which negates the feeling of being alive, like the sensation of a man holding snow in his hands while wearing thick gloves.

*

Light enters under the door, the door to father's study, from his desk lamp, testifying that he is still working; I'm a very small girl, allowed to sit in father's room and watch him, to observe the way he works.

Books provide, sometimes, the grain of sand that irritates us until we manage to grow a pearl in the lining of our shell.

The man sitting at the worktable is my father and he is translating, from Polish, a book by Janusz Korczak that will be known as *Yotam HaKasam*.² It's possible that he reads me a section about the boy who loves money. I think the boy is strange, and that there is a distortion in the way grownups perceive children.

*

Perhaps father—how unnaturally I use this word as if it came naturally to me—is translating Condolino from Italian. Is that the writer's name or the hero's? I do not know. In time I read this tedious book, about a boy who was turned into an ant because of his laziness, in someone else's translation. Mother told me—after father died—that because of the curfew imposed by

the British on certain neighborhoods in Jerusalem, father did not deliver his translation to the publisher on time, and the work was given to another man.

*

Thoughts about the past are also like memories. Conversations about breathing and esoteric Eastern theories that equate life itself with the act of breathing have always aroused opposition in me; they seem to me mistaken in principle. Because breath is a metaphor for life, you have to start with life and not with breath. Breath knows how to breathe as it should, if life is conducted properly.

*

The house is completely quiet like a deep secret. Mother sleeps. She is a teacher and of course teachers must sleep a proper number of hours, in order to set out for work in the morning. She also has Daria. Mother believes work is a source of sanity and claims that all her troubles descend upon her during summer vacation. By work she means, of course, the normative concept of a regular job, making a living. Father tried in vain to rebel against the imposition of a bourgeois lifestyle: wife, two daughters, job, home. He wanted, to the dismay of mother, who saw it as a betrayal of the pioneer ethic, to devote himself to writing, which at the time seemed decadent and effeminate. But father did not give in, perhaps sensing his approaching death, and whether in a feat of skill or out of desperation, he pried the Jerusalem Prize from one of the committees known for its intrigues, and earmarked it for a year's writing.

It is acceptable today to speak of ethnic groups and the cultural differences among them. But, in fact, every person represents a different culture. The difference between father and mother, clashing inside me to this day, will never be made clear to me, because the disappearance of my father from the

picture at a young age left me, to some extent, like a person who never knew him. Of course it's also hard for me to understand myself.

To a large extent, my parents represented different cultures. My father grew up without a mother, and my mother without a father, and they both held on tight to a substitute for the joy of living, or the lack of love, or of confidence perhaps. With my father it was love of literature or writing that he placed above all, and with my mother it was work, teaching. While he tried to find inner resources, my mother depended on pedantry. While he was the European gentleman who knew languages, was acquainted with the world and appreciative of form, with high standards in matters of dress and beauty—he was an aesthete—mother came from a Hassidic family, whose poverty or principle taught her to take intentions into consideration. Her maternal grandmother managed the students' cafeteria; mother and her brothers and sisters sometimes finished their meals from what the students left behind on their plates. The question of whether it is acceptable or not to mop a plate clean with a piece of bread did not occur to them. When mother met father's parents in their home, and stood to pick up a fork that had dropped from her hand, the creak of the moving chair was witness to her unsuitability as a marriage candidate.

Twenty years have passed, forty, fifty, and my mother still hears the creak of that chair.

Because of the difficulty in finding an apartment, we lived with grandfather and grandmother in one of the neighborhoods on the fringe of Mea Shearim. The scent of Jerusalem reached the alleyways of our neighborhood, together with the smell of smoke rising from kerosene stoves, blackening and thickening a kind of naïveté which caused me to sense the world around me through a wrapper of soft fog. My mother was first a student at the Lemmel School and then a teacher. From school she brought home tales of the different neighborhoods of Jerusalem, conducted in this spirit: one of

the mothers who was summoned to the school and scolded about her daughter said: "*Zug nicht*. I've seen many important women with big hats and underneath them—lice. What can we do, that's how the world is."

*

During the day I would go to the Sukenick nursery school, but the moment I'm describing now takes place at night. I sit on the sofa or the armchair, never ever lying down, in order to breathe more freely, and father sits with his back to me. From time to time he turns his unremembered profile toward me.

Night is an unknown country, if you awaken during hours not meant for you. The night of a midsummer night's dream, when spirits and nymphs emerge from their hiding places, where small girls are desirous of forbidden things, without even knowing what they are. I knew that beyond the wall of the house the darkness buried in its mouth the candy of the colorful flowers that grew in the garden at the edge of the slope. Just as Colette described in her beautiful book *Sido*. It seems that every child comes into the world with the idea of Paradise imprinted in him and doesn't need much to recreate it.

*

I sat opposite father's back in the land of night. Everyone slept but us: Daria, grandfather, grandmother and mother. Father was my lifesaver, because whoever wakes up breathless at night and finds someone else populating the darkness thinks of him as a rescuer.

But it wasn't father who unfettered my ability to breathe. I was the one who did it. In father's presence, in the presence of his busy back, I knew what to do that I didn't know in the presence of myself.

Suffering, father said to mother when she complained of my illness, broadens people's capacity for depth, like the English Channel allowing passage from one country to another.

But the one who took off for a completely different country was actually my father, whose departure only proved the justice of Greek tragedy. Father and mother, profoundly awesome like the statues of American presidents on Mount Rushmore, each one the size of the mountain into which he was hewn, casting shadows over our lives from the horizon.

Grandmother sat in the armchair—just now I remember her—and mother sat opposite. They cried, and to my amazement, grandmother slid off the chair onto the floor while crying. "I'm going to visit Molly," I said, to get attention and in order not to understand what was being said in the room. With an exaggerated demonstration of childishness, I tried as hard as I could to put off the growing up that descended on me with the knowledge of death, the lack of justice in life, and the terror that accompanies those who must face this before they have come to terms with the futility of man.

"I'm going to Molly," I announced. This was completely forbidden, for Molly's big sister was considered a wayward girl, and I was only permitted to play with Molly in the courtyard downstairs. "Go," mother said. Grandmother confirmed this with a nod of her head, and I went, leaving the women to their sorrow as they left me to mine; they innocently believed that I was innocent enough not to understand what I understood. Daria of course remained sitting.

Afterwards, years later, grandmother used to say to me: "In these hands, do you see," and she extended her large white arms, "In these hands he died."

He left behind 13 books, including novels, short stories, and notes from travels. I read his books when I was a child; afterwards I couldn't bring myself to open them.

Goodbye, sweet prince. He was 35. I was five.

Apparently we are bound to love the dead without being angry about their leaving us. I discovered a long time ago that if you cannot love your dead, you cannot love the living.

GIRL INSIDE GIRL INSIDE GIRL

At the shoemakers', I'm standing next to a barrel. I've been sent here because I lost my shoes. A scandal whirls around me. How is it possible to lose shoes? Last night, as soon as the loss was discovered, I was sent to the soccer field to look for them. I walked on the wet grass, walked until it hurt on ground seashells, the kind chickens love to eat and which are strewn on the path to prevent erosion. I extract joy from the cruelty of injustice. With every step, those who sent me to the field become even crueler.

*

It is clear to everyone that I did it on purpose, like the time when I was a little older and the barber from Afula trimmed my hair down to the skull. When I stood at the entrance to the dining hall, the people sitting down froze in astonishment; their eyes followed me as I sat at an empty place at table, while I tried to pile food on my plate from a serving platter, and to shove it into my mouth.

Nearly wanting to die because my ears stick out, I am considered a rebel in the classic spirit of the kibbutz. I am like Madame de Pompadour, at the court of Louis the 15th, in reverse.

I am compelled to become the other. I think of myself as absent islands swept away into an absent sea, while the other, in contrast to me, is a continuous presence. In order to revive and be saved from nonexistence, I pass a hand over the flame of the Sabbath candle, lingering longer than is feasible. I bite my hand in secret to see whether I feel alive. Meanwhile I observe the faces of the others in order to mimic good behavior. I am the one always making an effort to act according to the rules, while time after time a dark and mysterious factor raises its head and ruins my plans. Even the shoes guessed my weakness and acted against me. Perhaps, and this makes me even more afraid, perhaps they staged their rebellion out of my own hidden desires?

I'm frightened until I can't feel anything anymore. And then relieved. Outside, a light mist hangs in the air. The sidewalks are muddied with winter, heavy black dirt tracks, the reason for the straw spread on the dining room floor, so the dirt won't cling to the diners' shoes.

*

"Have you gone mad? Where can we get shoes now?" On the kibbutz, distribution of new shoes is made at Passover and Rosh Hashanah, one result of the desire to link popular culture to the land, to the ancient tradition of pilgrimage. Perhaps, nonetheless, a pair can be found outside this framework?

In order to reach the shoemakers, you descend a step, pass under the sloping ceiling in the hallway—low, like the apartment of a mole—and enter. It's warm and dark inside, the smell of leather mixed with glue and the scent of dusk. The two shoemakers, like a pair of trolls, sit bending over their lasts.

The shoemaker holding a nail between his lips mumbles something. I guess that he is telling me to stand quietly next to the barrel of "reserve" shoes until he is ready for me.

"Reserve" means something that doesn't belong to anyone and that may then belong to someone who happens to need it, although its essentially transient nature will not change when it belongs to someone else.

It's no accident that one needs to use a word in a foreign language, the language of those who forgot to take their shoes from the repair shop when they left. Perhaps the shoes belonged to someone in the American Habonim³ group, like the other things we find after they leave, when we pick through the garbage cans in the abandoned camp: shampoo bottles, soap, half-empty jars of cream, remnants of a lost civilization, like the Pharaonic magicians, or the Maya, giving notice that some place, some where, a rich, aromatic world exists. America.

Who knows how far the present world of rules stretches, like ripples drawn on water by a skipping stone.

I already knew; I'd heard about the draconian laws written in blood. Of course, they weren't called that by ancient peoples. Only we, with the cheerfulness of succeeding generations, enjoy taking a determined stand against them.

The infants, those with defects, were thrown against the rocks. Secretly I thought that what saved me was being born on Mt. Scopus and not in Sparta. Because this test isn't conducted at Hadassah Hospital. Sometimes a mistake saves your life. Place, too: Greece, the Jezreel Valley, Jerusalem.

*

Outside, the rain intensifies, beating with tiny fists on the shoemakers' window, and on the wild heart of the palm tree, so close to the window that with its every nervous twitch you can make out a dove trying to hide its entire body, tail included, in the heart of the tree.

One of the shoemakers, whose heel is raised to match the height of the other, longer leg, gets up to turn on the light and returns to his seat. His face, like that of his companion, contracts into itself. In spite of what's happened, I'm not really afraid of them. I know they're not from the central ideological stream of the kibbutz.

Of course, I didn't know then something that I have difficulty understanding even now: no place is too small for an "I" to evolve.

They certainly aren't centrists. If they identified a bit more with the place, the shoemakers might have provided refuge. But they are locked inside themselves, existing without any commitment to place. Perhaps they are trying to avoid the stigma that even I impose on them, as outsiders who came inside.

A miracle that takes place right before my eyes distracts me from these Cinderella musings.

I notice that drawn on the barrel is a girl holding a dove holding a girl holding a dove, infinitely, I think to myself, until the end of air and the end of time.

Is a sign being revealed to me? A girl inside a girl inside a girl, like a Chinese puzzle—a box inside a box inside a box; what you see does not explain everything either, only what's inside, and so forth.

What was revealed to me at that moment, without my being able to understand, was that the last girl will always be the first girl, and vice versa, and that you'll always be more than yourself and less than yourself, know and not know.

"Take," says the shoemaker, who has gotten up meanwhile, and then bends

to less than half his height, holding out a pair of purple shoes. "One of those crazy Americans," he says and gives them to me, demanding neither punishment nor character analysis.

"Purple." I don't say aloud what I'm thinking, that these shoes are more wondrous in my eyes than any other pair, and never would have been given to me on Passover or Rosh Hashanah. Someone's given me a prize, for what? The world is stranger than I imagine.

I go out looking humiliated, as befits someone being punished. This is how I return to the children's house, with a hapless expression masking loneliness. I haven't the courage to disclose my victory, afraid that someone will discover what I feel and take the purple shoes away.

At the same time I perceive and adopt the formula of a fall into my personal mythology.

*

Where I live, or perhaps it may be said, in the tribe I belong to, there is a ritual at bedtime. Parents, whose children spend all day in educational institutions, entertain them at home in the evening. When it comes time for sleep, parents escort the children to beds in the children's houses, draw up the covers, read stories, kiss, and part from them with a big fuss, at which point the children are supposed to drift directly into sleep.

"But look, Kalya always goes to sleep by herself, and doesn't make a big deal out of it," I hear a mother, sitting on the bed next to mine, say to her son.

This is the first time I watch myself from the sidelines. I'm amazed. And to my amazement, the tactic of nonchalance is unsuccessful. The attempt to camouflage the beast of loneliness with tiger spots of independence does

not work. I'm used to putting myself to bed without protest while my sister follows my mother to all her evening lessons and groups. Yet, just because I suppress the fear of loneliness, jealousy and sadness, I do not become one of the others. It is not enough to do what others do, you must enlist the members of your family too. Heredity, destiny. Perhaps I can change myself, but I can't be my own mother. It is urgent to find out the difference between myself and the other, in order to obscure it. How can I be the other?

Who is the other? He's in charge here, he fills the air, from the hills of Gilboa to the crest of Mt. Tabor. His honor fills a world. He is Caesar. The Golem of Prague. He is all existence.

I wander by myself along the pathways of the kibbutz while the others go to the rooms of their parents. I cannot join mother. I'm sure she's going to leave me; I know in my heart that I'm leaving her.

*

One day, I enter the room, and a new crystal vase stands on the table with a white flower, a gladiola, standing tall inside. Message: something's going on.

But the vase quickly disappears. And the music teacher, like a version of the statues on the piano, long tufts of hair growing out of the sides of his head, and pale in contrast to the tan, muscular people who work in the fields—the one who moved from Ein Harod to Geva to be with my mother—takes me, during one of my piano lessons, to water the young cypress he and mother planted near one of the chicken coops on the tree-planting holiday.

The tree, symbol of the holiday, now marks the month of Tammuz, the heat of summer. The piano teacher bemoans his lost relationship with my mother, trying to find out if a flickering coal remains, which might be rekindled.

Starting with the second man, I give mother a warning. "I dreamt," I tell her, "that uncle is a thief." Mother looks at me in fury, as though I doubt the propriety of others in order to gain an unfair advantage. She herself knows that dreams are not always false.

In punishment for my refusal to eat, I remain in the darkened children's house from the afternoon to the next morning. I hear mother in the next room preparing schoolchildren for the holiday ceremony. A daughter of her time, mother didn't dare to become an artist, but she has the temperament of one, a need for expression.

"Darken, darken, sky," they sing, and I cry for the death of Trumpeldor on the hills of Ephraim, receiving a new victim, a young one.

These productions cost me dearly, mostly because as a girl I discovered that they were an unwitting joyride for her ego. Her strong musical voice would overcome the voices of the children singing their different parts, the bee, the lion, the fox, and her whisper, too, erupted from backstage, to supply the missing lines forgotten by frightened actors.

Unlike my sister, who follows her to all the rehearsals, including of course the holiday productions, I would leave as soon as I could, to her dismay. When I was forced to take part, as a bird or a silver rabbit, or in the audience, every cough or scrape of a chair practically gave me a heart attack. I identified completely with my mother the director.

Looking back, it's obvious that the rabbits and hares, the kings and queens, in those days wearing silly hats and making the desert bloom, became part of my mentality.

I dedicated my first children's book to my mother. The written dedication

always makes me tremble. "To my mother, who knew how to teach many children, and me, about beauty and joy." The words are both true and a lie at the same time. It is written in the language of my childhood, in which the waters of life and poison amount to the same thing.

*

One of the childcare workers hit me for the same reasons, intense, hard blows, until once, when the water supply was disconnected and we went to eat in the teenagers' dining room, another worker who witnessed an incident stopped her by threatening to expose her at a kibbutz meeting.

*

... I can ... hold up my head and say to myself, [Colette writes]: I am the daughter of the woman ... [who] at the age of seventy-six ... was planning journeys and undertaking them, but that waiting for the possible bursting into bloom of a tropical flower held everything up and silenced even her heart, made for love. I am the daughter of a woman who, in a mean, close-fisted, confined little place, opened her village home to stray cats, tramps, and pregnant servant girls ... Let me not forget that I am the daughter of a woman who bent her head ... trembling between the blades of a cactus, her wrinkled face full of ecstasy over the promise of a flower, a woman who herself never ceased to flower, untiringly, during three-quarters of a century.

I can say this, too, but in the knowledge that it is only part of the truth.

—translated from the Hebrew by Lisa Katz

NOTES

1. Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, trans. C.K. Moncrieff (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 3-4.
2. "Yotam the Wizard"
3. Habonim: a Zionist youth movement
4. Colette, "Break of Day" in *Gigi and Other Writings*, trans. Enid McLeod (New York: New American Library, 1963), 98-99.

THE FIGHTING SPIDERS OF BOGEO

Peter Richards

There is that glass hull of sated people
who traffic in cardinal death.
Death always saying *you've made*
cardinals of us all, even though we have not.

In death the sod walls of Vinland
stand before me sixty head thick
and to the North free of contagion.
An orb weaver can pass through

quicker than thinking.
She has august-thin legs
and a head that is truly human-facial.
An orb weaver can pass through

only when eating cardinal brain.
Quick little vents appear
in between cardinals, suggesting
if worship alone could force stem folds

to go meiotic, still I would not worship.
If one could learn to palpate her dove-gray
colander pulses, still I would not palpate.
The ray spider speaks softly at first—

neutral sentiments designed to calm:
we are as one from the season no spider should ask this.
In the evening she becomes more intimate:
to me your eyes are as immutable

as two crushed spiders resurrected for vengeance.
Eventually she just bites you
and after days of drinking your sleep
retires to her own little nook in the vestment

visually recalling three or four things.

WHEN THE ARROW YOUNG MEN CREATED THE WORLD AND ONE BECAME PREGNANT BY THE OTHER

Jim Elledge

for Kristy Nielsen

Like separate breezes, two arrive
from opposite directions—
east, west—and meet: both young
men, each one now halfway
through his journey, each one ankle-
deep in water pooled
at the dead-center of nothing. No shore
rises out of the silver ocean or into
the silver sky. Nothing
fills the sky but its emptiness.

Where does sky begin?
the one out of the east thinks.
The one out of the west thinks:
Where does water end?

Then East puts his left hand on the other's
right shoulder and asks, "How about
the two of us trying it? What does

your heart say?" His breath skips
across West's face: tickles his lips, grazes
his eyelids, scurries over his earlobes.

West grins. "We should!
Here's some soot." He holds out one
hand and, with the other, grips
East's shoulder. West spits into it
first, then East. East blows on it first,
then West, who's been kneading
it all along. They divide the soot into five
pellets. They stop. East drops one
into the ocean. Its ripples fan
over the surface, far away, then farther
until they're out of sight.

Then West puts his left hand
on the other's shoulder and asks,
"How about the two of us trying it again?
What does your heart say?"
West drops another pellet into the ocean.
The second rocks to and fro
and skitters across the surface out of sight
as the two of them hold their sides
against the pain of their laughter.

Then night surrounds
them like a sigh.

*

The next day arrives before they
know it! Who could've imagined?

East and West still stand on the small
place where they stood before, one's
right hand on the left
shoulder of the other, eyes
locked, breaths weaving together
like strands of fog. East squeezes
West's shoulder and asks,
"How about the two of us trying it?
What does your heart say?"

East holds a pellet of soot out to West.
West spits onto it. East blows
onto it. East drops the third
one into the endless ocean as they both
hold their breaths. It splashes, a sound
that pierces the quiet then vanishes.
They watch it closely as it sinks
then bobs to the surface, quivering.
Mud! It becomes mud! Who
could've imagined it? Their
hearts fill with joy, their mouths
with laughter. They hug, one's
heart thumping against the other's
as bog—thicker than the sky's
silver, thicker than
the ocean's silver—
rises just beyond the ocean's
surface as song rises from their throats,
past their lips, out their mouths.

This time, day closes quickly on them
like a mouth that's tasted too

little food, but neither
struggles against it.

*

Another day: the third: a burst of orange
light on the horizon spreads
up and across the sky. The two men—
young East, young West—stand
on the bog. Their feet have sunk into its
mud ankle-high, no further.
Eddies lap their flesh. West puts his left
hand on East's right shoulder
and asks, "How about the two
of us trying it? What does your heart say?"

East spits onto a pellet of soot, West blows
onto it, and East drops a fourth. They
watch it steadily. Wind stirs. Heavy waves
ride the ocean's surface, the pellet
bouncing back and forth,
this way and that, on the waters.

East looks into West's eyes.
"What would your heart say if we tried it
again?" he asks, then adds: "What could we
use this time instead?"

The sun has perched on East's shoulder.
Its beams light the left side of his face,
throwing the right into shadow. He points
to the glob bouncing over the waves.

West says, "Let's split the matting where we lay last night in two. We'll try that."

Each takes an end of the matting and pulls. It snaps into halves. They fling each over the glob that dances on the waters, swaying to and fro, then the halves join. Matting and soot don't become solid land, but hold down the waves, rock over the waters.

Looking into West's eyes, East says, "Let's grab that basket over there and split it in half and use it. Does your heart agree? A good idea?"

The sun perches on the top of East's head, lighting his whole face. West nods. East's shadow covers West's whole body. Each grabs one side of the basket and pulls until it splits right down the middle into two perfect halves. They fling the basket halves. When they land on the matting which lies over the mud, the halves scoot over to one another and join together.

Then East and West pile an ocean beach onto the stack—now bog mud, matting, and basket—

to hold back the ocean's waves.
The stack splits in two. East and West
stand on one half of the beach
to see what's happened.
Both halves of the beach hold
the crashing waves at bay, but the crack
between lets some ocean
water trickle through onto the land.
"This is the way the world will
be now and forever. It must always
be this way," West says.

*

Now after some time, after days
and nights arrive and leave, the two
lands that East and West
created are ready, yet not one tree
or shrub or bush has sprouted
there. "What would your heart say
if we created a tree
to grow straight into the sky?" West asks.

East says, "Wonderful."

An eagle happens to fly by,
and both reach overhead
and grab a feather.
East buries his with only its tip
showing on one
plot of land. West buries his
the same way on the other.

They step back to admire
the sight. Then each feather tip
shakes, then again, then many
times until a seedling sprouts
from each feather tip. From a seedling,
each grows into a sapling. From a sapling,
each becomes a full-blown tree—a fir.
Those were the first of all.

East says, "From now on, plants
will grow from the land." And so all plants
began to grow: verbenas, laurel, wild
strawberry, and rhododendrons.

West says, "What would your heart
say if we created things that
walk about? The world isn't yet good,
but it will be when we have animals.
We'll make people, too,
to look after animals and plants."

Night wraps itself like a shawl around
them, sighing like a mother.

*

The next morning rises, a gold-pink
bird that flutters across the world.
East and West trail their tracks back
to where they began. They see
another set of footprints, but nothing like
theirs, strung across the sand.

East says, "Who's this? There's only
the two of us. No one else!"

They track the footprints and see,
in the distance, the blur
of a figure. When they get close enough,
they see a man straddling a creature
that lumbers over sand, an animal neither
East nor West has ever seen before.

When they get even closer, they yell,
"You! What sort of person are you?"
Their words echo over the terrain.

"I'm a medicine person," he yells
back. He has drawn
designs on his face with paint.

West says, "We can see that.
As we looked up and down our land,
we knew we'd never seen you
before. He and I made the land you're
standing on and all that sprouts
from it or grazes on it. It's obvious
you're Medicine Person."

By now, East and West stand within
arm's reach of Medicine Person,
and without a word, they leap on him,
both at the same time. They clench
their fists and beat Medicine Person.

"After this, you'll never be anything,"
East says to him, pulling a club
from his belt.

West says, "The last person
you'll see will be East," also pulling
a club from his belt.

They club Medicine Person to a pulp,
his blood splattering every inch
of land—everything and everyone
on it—in every direction.

Leaving Medicine person's body in a heap,
East and West take two steps
backward and return to the spot
where they'd begun.

Suddenly, East's stomach
bulges then hardens and fills
with the flutter of wings. East knows
he's pregnant. *How will I
give birth?* he wonders to himself.

"What's this?" West asks, sliding his
hand over East's belly. "If you were a woman,"
he tells East, "it'd be easier."

East's stomach grows. The fluttering
wings he felt earlier disappear.
Then he feels a pair of fists inside,
beating against his skin.
He flushes. The only way for him

to give birth is for West to pull
the child from his body. So he imagines
someone and tells West,
"Across this ocean,
a person lives. A good person.
Not a medicine person.
Let's go and get him to help."

West agrees, and he and East
get into a canoe to get Good Person
to help East give birth to their child.

They paddle hour after hour
until their strength gives out. Between breaths,
West says, "I'm surprised we haven't
come across any breakers."

They rest a short time, and as they do,
East imagines waves. He says,
"The North Wind will blow with us five
times. Each time, a roller
will push us along."

Rested, they take up their paddles
and begin again, expecting five rollers
at any second. Hours later,
West points to a speck in the distance
and tells East, "Look! Land!"

At the same moment, the North Wind grows
from a gentle breeze to short blasts.
East counts each surge

and times their paddling, so that,
at the fifth blast, it'll shove them shoreward
and he'll step out onto the beach.

So it was, because whatever East
imagines happens a short time later.
East leaps onto the beach. He sinks ankle-
deep in the sand and struggles to pull
his feet out. Water quickly fills
his footprints. Then West follows.

Good Person sees them and runs to greet
both. He notices East is pregnant.
He touches East's belly and feels the tiny
fists drumming against the lining
of his stomach. "Squat," he tells East.

To West he says, "Weave
your fingers together into a cradle
and put them between East's thighs. Here,"
he shows him, "like this."

Over and over, Good Person caresses East's
belly from his navel down until
a child slips out of his body into West's hands.
A girl! East gives birth to a woman child,
a daughter from his body!

She begins to grow, in stages:
at first, an infant suckling East's breast, then
a few hours later, a toddler struggling
to walk, then a child playing games among

the three of them, then by night: full-grown! A woman! Full-grown!

West blows into her mouth,
and when she exhales, she exhales
words. East blows into her mouth.
When she exhales, she sings.

Good Person hears her song and says
to her, "What would your heart
say if we did it?" His breath slips across her
face: tickles her lips, grazes her
eyelids, scurries over her earlobes.
Girl Child grins. "We should!" she says
and touches Good Person's right cheek.

East begins to dance:
a gentle breeze.
West begins to sweat:
a drizzle.
Their breaths rise fog-like
in the cool twilight
and swell into cumulus
above them as
Night wraps its dark wings around
them, sighing like a father.

*

A new morning flows over their
lands—a whisper—and wraps
itself around and around

East and West as they walk over
their creation. One then the other points
to their shadows: how they
slide across each other, how one
lingers atop the other, how one remains
beside the other. The shadows'
play makes them laugh.

As they walk, plants sprout where none
had been before, crowding the land horizon
to horizon. West says, "Plants
will grow here from now without end,"
and East imagines the sight.

Each has a bow. East has a thought
and asks West, "Why don't you shoot
an arrow into the clouds?
Then I will.
What does your heart say about that?"

West agrees. He slips an arrow
into place, pulls the string back to his
ear, then releases it. The string's
hum fills his ear with song. As West's
arrow slices the sky, he says to East,
"It's your turn. Aim at my arrow.
See if you can pierce its shaft
with your arrow. If so, It'll be as if
we two were one. You can do it!"

East slips an arrow into place,
pulls the string back to his earlobe,

then releases it. The string's
hum fills his ear with prayer. East's
arrow pierces the shaft of West's.
The two become one. East shoots another,
and it, too, pierces West's arrow.
Again and again, East shoots,
and each time, his arrow pierces
West's. The two become
one over and over.

Finally, West's arrow—
with all of East's stuck into its shaft—
falls not far from them and sticks
straight up. They stare at it, West's pierced
with all of East's, West's joined with
East's, not once but many, many times.

East has a thought. He puts his
left hand on the other's
shoulder and asks,
"What would your heart say
if we climbed up the arrows?"
His breath skips across
West's face, tickles his lips, grazes
his eyelids, scurries over his earlobes.

"Great idea!" West says, and grins.

East shakes the arrow ladder
once, twice, three times.
"It's sturdy," he says. "It won't fall
apart. Climb up. Try. It reaches
to the top of the sky," East says.

West climbs up to the top, and after
he finally catches his breath,
he yells down to East, "The world's
even more wonderful from up here than
from down there. Come on up!"

East climbs up, too, until he reaches
the peak of the sky. "What does your heart
say now?" West asks East, who's panting
for breath. But all that they had created—
the land, the plants and animals,
their daughter, their grandchildren—
is so beautiful East can't reply.
From there, arm in arm, they look
down together and laugh.
Their laughter is the song birds make,
calling one to another at dawn, at dusk.

*

No one knows the fate that befell
East and West. This scrap is all
that remains of their story.
Here it stops.

BULLDOG TOY

Cort Day

I'm starting to vibrate with phony grief,
like a planet troubled by a sparrow,
no, more like a rock elm grown so dark
that when the imaginary unit
comes out to play beneath it, finally,
it is precisely the hour of its vanishing.
The story turns this or that way in the mouth
of whoever tells it: a neighborhood stray
runs off with someone's bulldog toy;
or those who live in the hills bombard
the lowland neighbor towns with mortar fire.
The TV issues streams of refugees
made of phosphors, their blankets flicker,
they shiver in our living rooms, unable to speak.
I'm starting to vibrate with phony grief
at the sight of this town, its wind-swept vistas
full of freezer burn, its doxology
of art-in-life already a mortal dream.
If I still had my tuba I'd march around
playing songs for all my several loves, songs
meant to arc between the one who speaks
and the one who won't. I was first to volunteer
to mount a search for the bulldog toy,
though it will probably be "found by hikers"
a few months from now, very possibly
with my fingerprints all over it. There is,

of course, no such thing as a bulldog toy.
I'm starting to vibrate because root pressure
is building in the trees, because the budded limbs
are a surety of grace, because a song is moving,
readying itself, and nothing will ever be the same.

CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN ASHBERRY's most recent book is *As Umbrellas Follow Rain* (Qua Press, 2001).

PETER BOYLE is a poet and translator of French and Spanish poetry. He is the author of a book of poems, *The Blue Cloud of Crying*, and a selection of the poetry of César Vallejo.

STEPHEN COPE's work has appeared in *XCP: Cross-Cultural Poetics*, *Shark*, *Mirage: A Period(ical)*. He is the editor of *The Poetics of Veracity: Selected Prose and Papers of George Oppen*.

CORT DAY's *The Chime* was published by Alice James Books in 2001. He lives and works in New York City.

RUSSELL EDSON's most recent book is *The Tormented Mirror* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

JIM ELLEDGE's recent books include a limited edition chapbook and a prose-poem novel. The poem printed here is based on the story of a Coos nation creation myth, first transliterated into English in 1913.

PAUL ÉLUARD (1895-1952) was a central figure in the Surrealist movement in France in the 1920s. The poems in this issue come from *Une leçon de morale/A lesson in Morality* (1950).

THE GHOSTS OF MY FRIENDS is taken from a series of books published by

the Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, in the 1920s and 30s. The books, made up of blank pages, came with the following instructions: *Sign your name along the fold of the paper with a full pen of ink, and then double the page over without using blotting paper.*

GRAND SICHUAN INT'L, considered one of the best Chinese restaurants in Manhattan, is located at 229 9th Avenue (24th St.). Thanks to owner John Chang for allowing us to re-print his specials menu.

JEFF HILLIARD and NINA SWIFT's cover was inspired by a selection of Dean Young's poems. They live and work in Brookline, MA.

CHRIS JACKSON's work appears or is forthcoming in *The Washington Review*, *Main Street Rag*, and *The Sandhill Review*.

RICHARD JACKSON is the author of four collections of poems. His fifth, *Half-Lives: Petrarchan Poems*, which include the poems selected here, is based on Petrarchan rhyme schemes and Jackson's sense of a "Petrarchan perspective."

LISA KATZ is a poet and translator living in Jerusalem. Her translations have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry International*, *Luan* and *A View From the Loft*.

LISA LUBASCH is a poet and translator. She is co-translator of Paul Éluard's *Une leçon de morale / A lesson in Morality* (forthcoming, Green Integer Books).

JOYELLE MCSWEENEY's first collection of poems, *The Red Bird*, is forthcoming in 2002 from FENCE Books.

ROD MENGHAM is a poet, translator and Senior Lecturer at Cambridge University.

EUGENIO MONTEJO was born in Venezuela in 1938. He is the author of nine collections of poems and two collections of essays. In 1998 he received Venezuela's National Prize for Literature.

GEORGE OPPEN (1908-1984) was the author of eight books of poetry. Along with William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky, he was one of the primary exponents of the Objectivist movement in the early 1930s. This selection copyright by Linda Oppen (2001); printed by permission.

PETER RICHARDS is the author of *Oubliette* (Verse Press, 2001). He lives in Somerville, MA.

JAMES SHEA is on a fellowship to study haiku at the University of Utsunomiya in Japan.

REGINALD SHEPHERD is the author of four books of poems. His fifth collection, *Otherhood*, is forthcoming from the

University of Pittsburgh Press.

ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI is the author of seven collections of poetry, including *Zoom* (2000) and *Selected Texts* (2001). He has also translated the work of authors such as Elizabeth Bishop, John Cage, and Ezra Pound into Polish. He lives in Warsaw.

STEPHANIE STRICKLAND's forthcoming book, *V*, is written in three interconnected versions. Two will appear in one volume (Penguin, 2002) and the third will be published on the Web.

WAYNE SULLINS is a poet, painter, and graphic artist. He lives in Massachusetts with his son, Miekka.

ARTHUR SZE's most recent books are *The Silk Dragon: Translations from the Chinese* (Copper Canyon, 2001) and *The Redshifting Web: Poems 1970-1998* (Copper Canyon, 1998).

LIZ WALDNER's most recent book is *Self and Simulacra* (Alice James Books, 2001). Her third collection, *Dark Would*, is forthcoming (University of Georgia Press, 2002).

DARA WIER's most recent collection of poems is *Hat on a Pond* (Verse Press, 2001).

NURIT ZARCHI is a poet and the author of numerous children's books. She teaches at Ben Gurion University.

CONTINUING SUPPORTERS

The editors wish to thank the following individuals
whose contributions continue to help make jubilat possible:

ANONYMOUS

SETH ALLEN

ANNETTE BANTON

KEVIN BRINE

GINGER CASPER

NICHOLAS A. CASPER

STEPHEN & RACHEL CASPER

MARION & SIDNEY COVICH

ANNA CREADICK

JOHN A. DAUER

LAUREN DIAS

VIRGINIA L. DUNCAN

BILL & GAIL ENGLER

ANNIE FINCH

NORMAN & FRANCES GOODRICH

FLOURNOY HOLLAND

WENDY JOLLES

CHRIS & GERRY KOCHANSKY

PETER KOCHANSKY

JEFFREY LEVINE

JEFF MCCORMICK

DICK & FAITH MORNINGSTAR

MIRI NAVASKY

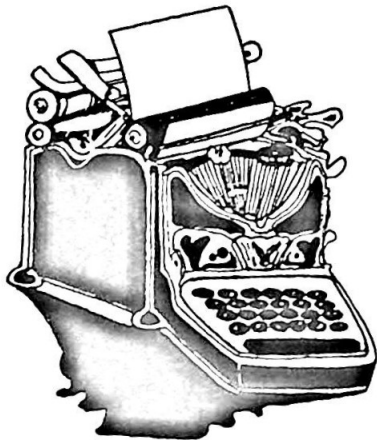
DIANE O'DONOGHUE

LINDA OLSTEIN

CHRISTOPHER SMART

Black Warrior Review

University of Alabama
<http://www.sa.ua.edu/osm/bwr>



SUBSCRIBE NOW!

- ☐ 1 year subscription \$14
☐ 2 year subscription \$26

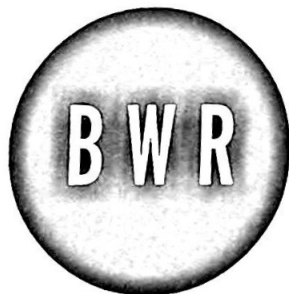
Name

Address

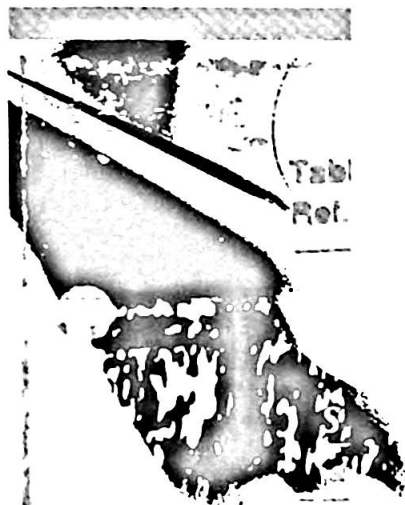
City/State/Zip

Send check & order form to: P.O. Box 862936 Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35486

Barry Hannah
John Barth
C.D. Wright
Noy Holland
Yusef Komunyakaa
Janet Burroway
W.S. Merwin
Billy Collins
Nicole Cooley
James Baker Hall
Tomaz Salamun
Nancy Eimers
and more...



Fiction
Poetry
Essays
Reviews
Interviews
Photography



Tabl
Ref.



**SLOPEEDITONS.ORG &
SLOPE.ORG



**WHERE MOVEMENTS
HAPPEN

contributors

John Ashbery
Cort Day
Russell Edson
Jim Elledge
Paul Éluard
The Ghosts of My Friends
Grand Sichuan Int'l
Chris Jackson
Richard Jackson
Joyelle McSweeney
Eugenio Montejó
George Oppen
Peter Richards
James Shea
Reginald Shepherd
Andrzej Sosnowski
Stephanie Strickland
Wayne Sullins
Arthur Sze
Liz Waldner
Dara Wier
Nurit Zarchi



interview and poems
Dean Young

